

John Adams Library.



IN THE CUSTODY OF THE
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.



SHELF NO

✱ ADAMS

151.7

HISTORY
OF
BRAintree, MASSACHUSETTS
(1639-1708)
THE NORTH PRECINCT OF BRAintree
(1708-1792)
AND
THE TOWN OF QUINCY
(1792-1889)
BY
CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS



CAMBRIDGE
Printed at the Riverside Press
1891

ADAMS 151.4

Copyright, 1891,
By CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

All rights reserved.

No. 10.

PREFACE.

C. F. X.

THE original sketch, upon which this volume has been developed, was prepared in 1883-4 for the large History of Norfolk County then published. The sketch of the history of early Braintree and Quincy, as it there appears, was written in haste, and at a time when the author was subject to many other calls upon him of different characters. Intended as a preliminary study merely, besides being hurried and imperfect in preparation, it contained many and obvious errors.

The present book is likewise a preliminary study, made in the preparation of another work of a more general character. Fifty copies of it only are printed for private distribution, and to be placed in certain public libraries; where, if desired, the references to authorities can be consulted. The paper on Some Phases of Sexual Morality and Church Discipline in Colonial New England, printed in the sixth volume of the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society (Series II. pp. 477-516), is likewise properly a part of the work, and is accordingly included with it.

In completing this study, which from its detail has chiefly a local value, I wish to acknowledge the debt I owe to Dr. Pattee's History of Old Braintree and Quincy, without the patient and laborious accumulations contained in which my work in its present shape would have been impossible.

"THE ANNEX."

QUINCY, *September 1, 1891.*



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	iii
I. OLD BRAINTREE	1-9
II. THE BRAINTREE NORTH PRECINCT CHURCH . . .	10-57
III. LAND TITLES AND THE TOWN'S COMMONS . . .	58-73
IV. THE HIGHWAYS	74-86
V. DWELLINGS AND MODES OF LIFE	87-93
VI. POPULATION AND WEALTH	94-101
VII. SOCIAL LIFE	102-120
VIII. THE VICIOUS, THE POOR AND THE INSANE . . .	121-128
IX. THE MEETING-HOUSE	129-143
X. THE CHURCH, AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE	144-157
XI. THE TRAINING-FIELD AND THE SCHOOL-HOUSE . .	158-173
XII. INTemperance AND IMMORALITY	174-185
XIII. HEALTH, READING, DIVERSIONS	186-192
XIV. THE TOWN RECORDS	193-202
XV. THE INDIAN AND FRENCH WARS	203-215
XVI. THE REVOLUTIONARY EPOCH	216-257
XVII. EXHAUSTION	258-266
XVIII. RECUPERATION	267-286
XIX. THE ERA OF CHANGE	287-298
XX. THE QUINCY SCHOOL SYSTEM	299-309
XXI. THE ALIEN INFUSION	310-322
XXII. THE REBELLION	323-325
XXIII. TOWN-MEETINGS AGAIN	326-333
XXIV. A LONG BATTLE WON	334-337
XXV. "THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE KING" .	338-360
XXVI. THE PAST AND THE FUTURE	361-365

HISTORY OF QUINCY.

CHAPTER I.

OLD BRAINTREE.

IT was upon what is now the 18th of November, though reckoned as the 8th only of the month according to the calendar then in use, that sentence of banishment was passed on John Wheelwright by the General Court of Massachusetts; and, in less than two weeks from that day, or before the 1st of December, 1637, the preacher of the "Chappel of Ease" at "the Mount" had forever left his people there, and was on his way to New Hampshire. The character and extent of the settlements, at that time, on the shores of Boston Bay south of the Neponset, have already been referred to. Practically, the region was still a forest wilderness of swamp, salt marsh and upland. There was as yet no road from Boston to Plymouth, for the path to the latter place — the same which Phinehas Pratt had lost his way in following thirteen years before — began at Wessagusset, and such little intercourse as there was between those dwelling at Wessagusset and at Boston was by boat across the bay. The Indian trail did not follow the shore, nor could it be called a path, for the eye of the trained woodsman was needed to detect its devious way as it wound about the head-waters of tidal inlets, and circled the uplands in search of fords, or those points where alone it was possible to cross the swamps. A forlorn remnant of the Massachusetts, the stricken survivors of plague and small-pox, haunted the forest, the ghost of a dying race; but between the Neponset and the Manatoquit there were absolutely no white inhabitants. First Morton and the Merry-Mount com-

pany had been rooted out by the magistrates, who afterwards had hunted Gardiner into the wilderness; and, so far as those two earliest attempts at settlement were concerned, axe and fire had done the work of obliteration with all possible thoroughness, as Alderman, the pioneer settler at Hingham, found when, in 1634, having occasion to be in Boston, he undertook to return home by trail instead of by boat. His experience has already been referred to, and it was even more severe than that of Phineas Pratt in the similar region a little further south, though more than eleven years earlier; for, losing his way, Alderman, during three days and nights, wandered through woods and swamps without falling in with a habitation, either house or wigwam, or a human being, white or red. Then, at last, exhausted and starved, with torn clothing and bruised body, he had struggled out of the wilderness to find himself in Scituate. The Neponset was the southern limit of the Massachusetts settlement, and the region beyond it remained a wilderness, through which, and beneath the dense tangle of the primeval forest, the streams that had their sources among the Blue Hills worked a sluggish and devious way into the coast-indenting tidal creeks, whose wide margins of wet salt-marsh were submerged at times of flood.

Of the original settlers thereabouts, — the “old planters,” as they were called, — the widow of David Thomson only had been left, dwelling with her infant son and a few servants on the farm cleared and cultivated by her husband at the very point where Miles Standish and his party had landed, when, thirteen years before, they first visited Boston Bay. Reference has also been made to the land hunger which was such a marked trait among the early settlers of the Massachusetts colony, and to that consequent order of the General Court made in May, 1634, that Boston, being “too small to contain many,” so that those living there were “constrained to take farms in the country,” should “have convenient enlargement at Mt. Wollaston.” A committee of four was then appointed to fix metes and bounds, and to report the same, with an accompanying plan or map, to the next General Court. Though neither the plan prepared by this committee, nor the report submitted with it, are to be found among the records,

the duty assigned to it was apparently performed, for at the next session of the General Court, that of September, 1634, the "enlargement" of Boston at Mt. Wollaston was formally ordered. The Boston records then take up the story, and at a general meeting of freeholders held on the 8th of December following, on public notice, a grant, the description of which forms matter for the first paragraph on the second page of those records, was made to "Mr. Willson the Pastor." The Rev. John Wilson of the first church of Boston was, therefore, the earliest landowner under the Massachusetts charter in what subsequently became the township of Braintree, and is now the city of Quincy.

The grant to Mr. Wilson covered 365 acres lying in the southern part of the Mt. Wollaston "enlargement," not far from the Weymouth fore-river, as the estuary into which the Manatiquot emptied itself was called. When he went to take possession of his grant, Mr. Wilson found himself confronted by an Indian title, and this he had to, and did, extinguish. It was the same with the other original grantees in that region; they all held direct from the Indians, as well as from the town of Boston. But thirteen months seem to have elapsed after the grant to Wilson before further grants were made; then, at last, at a meeting of freeholders held on the 4th of January, 1636, the point which still bears his name was allotted to Atherton Hough; and, at the same meeting, instead of making other individual allotments, a committee of five, clothed with full powers, was appointed to do the work. Through the action of this committee, approved by vote of the town, the entire bay-front from Squantum to the Weymouth fore-river subsequently passed into the hands of three men, — Atherton Hough, William Coddington and Edmund Quincy, — while further inland lay the 600 acres allotted near the Dorchester line to William Hutchinson, and the 250 acres assigned to John Wheelwright, close to the Wilson grant, at the other extremity of the "enlargement."

Although at this time a committee, at the head of which was Winthrop, had already been appointed "to Consider of the Mount Woolistone businesse, and for the ripening thereof how there may be a Town there" with the consent of Boston,

"the Mount" still seems to have been looked upon as a remote, outlying dependency, to be reached conveniently enough by boat in summer, but in winter practically inaccessible. A little over one month before the Mt. Wollaston committee was appointed, on the ^{21th}_{9th} of ^{October}_{November}, it will be remembered John Wheelwright had been "granted unto for the preparing for a church gathering" there. It was evidently intended to incorporate a town at once; and little doubt exists that the body of immigrants who during the summer of 1637 came, as Winthrop says, "out of England from Mr. Brierly his church" would have joined the flock to which Wheelwright ministered, and consequently become freeholders of the proposed new town, had they not been confronted at landing with that alien law, the purpose and operation of which has already been described. They were consequently obliged to find a place for settlement elsewhere, and outside the Massachusetts jurisdiction.

Naturally, amid the complications and fierce quarrels of 1637, nothing was done by the committee of December 10th in the "ripening" way; nor, for the next three years was anything more heard of the project of a new church and another town south of the Neponset. It lay in abeyance, awaiting the advent of quieter times. During the interval the dwellers at and about Mt. Wollaston would seem to have been poor people, the "servants" as they were called of the large landholders; for there is no reason to suppose that any person of note or substance had yet actually made his home there. Quincy and Hough and Coddington, like Wilson and Hutchinson, lived in Boston, though unquestionably they cultivated portions of the tracts which had been granted to them; for in the records of 1637 mention is made of "the little meadow" adjoining Coddington's grant, "where Mr. William Hutchinson had hay mown this last year." There must also have been a dwelling-house of some description on Hutchinson's allotment, for his wife tarried there for a time in the early part of April, 1638, while still uncertain whether she was to share Wheelwright's New Hampshire exile, or follow her husband to Rhode Island. Coddington also had already made considerable improvements on his farm, for when, a year

later, he made a sale of it to Captain William Tyng, the wealthy Boston merchant, he retained shelter for a large herd of cattle, thirty head, during the next winter. But, even subsequently to 1637, large allotments, indicative of a non-resident ownership, appear to have been made at "the Mount." For instance, Benjamin Keayne, son-in-law to Governor Dudley, had meted out to him on his marriage, in February, 1638, "a great lot of meadow and upland," two hundred acres in extent. In February, 1640, "a great Lott of 400 acres" was assigned to "Mr. Richard Parker, Marchant," who had by vote been "allowed to be an inhabitant" on the 30th of the previous September. Then, on the 28th of the following September, 200 acres were granted to Mr. Henry Webb, and the same amount to "our Brother Robert Scott." On the 26th of August, 1639, leave had been "granted to Mr. Anthony Stoddard, lynning drap. to become a Townsman." Stoddard was later on a constable,¹ and then a selectman of Boston, and to him also there was granted a "great Lott of 100 acres," which ten years later he received "libertye to sell" to Moses Payne, one of the largest of the

¹ There is in Winthrop an incident connected with this Stoddard, and his performance of his duties as constable, singularly characteristic of early Massachusetts. The constables, being chosen by the General Court, were among the chief people in their several towns. In 1641, Francis Hutchinson, son of Mistress Anne, and a son-in-law of hers, one Collins, came to Boston and "reviled the church." "They were both committed to prison; and it fell out that one Stoddard, being then one of the constables of Boston, was required to take Francis Hutchinson into his custody till the afternoon, and said withal to the governor, 'Sir, I come to observe what you did, that if you should proceed with a brother otherwise than you ought, I might deal with you in a church way.' For this insolent behaviour he was committed; but being dealt with by the elders and others, he came to see his error, which was that he did conceive that the magistrate ought not to deal with a member of the church before the church had proceeded with him. So the next Lord's-day, in the open assembly, he did freely and very affectionately confess his error and his contempt of authority, and being bound to appear at the next court, he did the like there to the satisfaction of all. Yet for example's sake he was fined twenty shillings, which, though some of the magistrates would have had it much less, or rather remitted, seeing his clear repentance and satisfaction in public left no poison or danger in his example, nor had the commonwealth or any person sustained danger by it." Savage's *Winthrop*, ii. *39-40.

Braintree landowners. Edward Tyng, on the 30th of December, 1639, was granted "a great Lott" of 250 acres in what is now the town of Randolph, but was then "the Mount," all "on the upper side of the Pond." These, and many others of a like character, were exceptional grants, based on the old English precedent, and intended to make of the families of those who received them a landed gentry of the province; and, as such, these grants did not add greatly to the population or the prosperity of the region in which they were made. But large grants were not the rule. Another system was all this time being pursued towards "the common people," as they were called, who were coming over to New England in crowds. The custom was to allot such, irrespective of sex or age, but grouping them in families, four acres a head; and in the case of Boston the smaller allotments were made largely at the Mount, twenty-six such being recorded in 1638, and fifteen more in 1639. Prior to the incorporation of Braintree in May, 1640, 105 such allotments in all had been parcelled out to families, numbering 565 persons, showing that the average family, including probably servants as well as children, was between five and six persons. But though these allotments are recorded, it cannot be inferred that all those to whom they were made actually settled at the Mount. On the contrary, the names of only a small portion of them are at a somewhat later period to be found in the town and parish records, and the natural inference is that many received their allotments in one place, and, in those days of abundant land, preferred to settle elsewhere.

Nevertheless, a certain portion of these poorer people did go out and build dwellings south of the Neponset, and at last a decisive movement was made towards the establishment of an independent church there. The "Chapel of Ease" arrangement, involving, as it did, dependency on a mother church, no longer sufficed for the spiritual needs of a growing population. The region had also stood an unoccupied gap of heathendom long enough; for the Dorchester church, on the north, went back to June, 1630, while the societies of Weymouth and Hingham, on the south, dated respectively from July and September, 1635. Without, therefore, waiting for a formal adjustment of all questions with Boston, on the

16th of September, 1639, those dwelling at the Mount, in the words of Governor Winthrop, "gathered a church after the usual manner, and chose one Mr. Tomson, a very gracious, sincere man, and Mr. Flynt, a godly man also, their ministers." The form of procedure in such cases had been established at the gathering of earlier churches in Roxbury and in Cambridge, nor was it devoid of a simple dignity. In the case of the Cambridge, or New Towne society as it was then called, gathered on the 1st day of February, 1636, after one of the two elders of the proposed church had begun with prayer, and he who had been selected to be its pastor had "exercised," the cause of their coming together was declared to the assembled ministers and magistrates, and it was asked how many were needful to form a church, and how they should proceed. Some of the ancient ministers conferred together, and reported that seven was a fit number. In accordance with the further counsel of these ancient ministers, those who were to form the church, beginning with its proposed pastor, then made confession of faith and of their personal religious experience; after which the covenant was read and assented to. In the case of the church at Braintree, the signatures of six persons, besides those of the pastor and teacher, were affixed to the covenant. Drawn up in the simple but not unimpressive form then in common use, by virtue of it those entering into the compact — "poor unworthy creatures, who have sometime lived without Christ and without God in the world" — promised thereafter "to worship the Lord in spirit and truth, and to walk in brotherly love and the duties thereof according to the will of the gospel." In witness of which, they made public profession of faith in presence of those assembled, and gave to one another the right hand of fellowship. The church at Braintree was the fifteenth which had been gathered in the province of Massachusetts Bay during the ten years of its settlement.

The incorporation of the town followed hard upon the gathering of the church, for, at the following session of the General Court, that of May, 1640, the "petition of the inhabitants of Mount Wollaston was acceded to, and it was granted them to be a town, to be called Braintree." No well-authenticated or wholly satisfactory reason for the choice of

this name has ever been given, nor is there any bond of connection apparent between the Suffolk Braintree, of New England, and the Essex Braintree, of Old England. The subject has more than once been discussed, but with no satisfactory result; though the more probable explanation is also the most natural. In 1632 a company of Essex people had come out with the Rev. Thomas Hooker, afterwards the renowned pastor of the church at Hartford. Winthrop refers to them as "the Braintree company."¹ They first went across the Neponset, where they began a settlement; and then, by order of the General Court, they moved over to Cambridge. When, therefore, eight years later, the place to which they first went was incorporated as a town, a name was given to it, probably at Winthrop's suggestion, connected with that "Braintree company which had begun to sit down at Mount Wollaston." But there is no reason to suppose that any of Hooker's following had remained meantime on the spot.²

The vote incorporating the town of Braintree contained detailed reference to an agreement which had been effected between certain representatives of those dwelling at the Mount and the authorities of Boston. The vested interests of the latter place in the former had again been asserted, and the question thus raised proved one not easy to settle. There had evidently been much bickering. Appealing to the "enlargement" vote of 1634, it was contended on the one side that Boston and the Boston church would, through the incorporation of the new town, be shorn of their proportions; while on the other side a growing population asserted their natural rights. The result was a compromise, the terms of which are by no means free from ambiguity. Under it all the lands in the new township seem to have been released from a liability to taxation as a part of Boston, and also from future county taxes, upon the payment to Boston of a trifle over a shilling an acre on the land "formerly granted to divers men of Boston upon expectation they should have continued still with us," and three shillings an acre for every acre that had been, or thereafter should be, granted to any others not inhabitants

¹ Savage, *Winthrop*, i. 87, 88.

² See *Thayer Memorial*, 39, 40; Lunt, *Bi-Centennial Discourse*, 66; Adams, *Braintree Address*, 26-29.

of Boston. In other words, the actual settlers in Braintree were to pay into the Boston treasury a sum of money on their holdings in commutation. At the same time further large allotments at the Mount were made, including five hundred acres "for the use of the Canoneere of Boston Wheresoever he is, or shall be, in the service thereof, from time to time," and "two thousand acres to be sett apart for the use of (Boston) in the most Convenient place unallotted."

This agreement was made on the 11th of January, 1639, some five months before the General Court acted on the petition to incorporate. And when the court did act, it made a further proviso that, if the inhabitants of the newly created town failed to fulfil the covenant they had entered into, it should be in the power of Boston to recover its dues by action against the Braintree people, collectively or individually. That the burden thus imposed on Braintree was an unusual and most oppressive one does not need to be said. It was the case of a poor, struggling community being compelled to buy out alien vested interests in the soil, which never ought to have existed. Accordingly, at a later time it proved a fruitful source of heart-burnings and litigation. Nevertheless the arrangement, favorable or otherwise, seems to have been the best it was possible to effect at the time, and under it Braintree came into existence as an independent political community on the 13th, or what is now the 23d, of May, 1640. Those dwelling in the new town were also made to realize at once that political privileges carried with them corresponding obligations, for by the same court they were assessed twenty-five pounds in a total levy of twelve hundred pounds. In payment of this levy silver plate was to be received at five shillings the ounce, "good old Indian corn, being clean and merchantable," at five shillings the bushel, summer wheat at seven shillings, and rye at six shillings. In which of these several staples the whole or any portion of this earliest tax levy was paid, nowhere appears; but that it was paid admits of no doubt, and at the next session of the General Court, held in Boston on the 7th day of the following October, William Cheeseborough and Stephen Kinsley appeared, and took their seats as the first representatives of Braintree.

CHAPTER II.

THE BRAINTREE NORTH PRECINCT CHURCH.

THE original Braintree settlement was along the shore of the bay, and on the upland and in the valleys adjacent thereto. Only by slow degrees did population work its way back among the hills and interior valleys. In 1708 the church of Braintree was divided, and the original settlement became the North Precinct. In 1792 this North Precinct was set off from the rest of the town, and became Quincy. The old town and present city of Quincy, therefore, was the original Braintree; and subsequently, for more than eighty years, the history of the North Precinct of Braintree is the history of Quincy.

Until 1708, therefore, the original Braintree church was the one church of the town; from 1708 to 1792 it was the North Precinct church; from 1792 to 1820 it was the Quincy church. The revised constitution of Massachusetts went into effect in 1820. Under its provisions a complete separation of church from state took place. But the habits of the people were fixed, and several years elapsed before this change in the organic law began to produce its full results,¹ for people went on attending divine worship in the meeting-house of their fathers, and in Quincy it was ten years yet before another meeting-house was built. Accordingly, the sole church of the Braintree of 1639 was still, until 1830, the sole church of Quincy.

The society had then worshipped in four successive buildings, the last of which was in 1830 almost new, having been

¹ So fixed was the belief that obligatory support of a church was essential to its continued existence that the late Judge Story voiced a very common sentiment when, at the time the amended constitution took effect, he expressed the opinion that in twenty-five years there would not be a church open in Massachusetts in which the old religious services would be held.

finished only two years before. Built of stone, it was called a "temple," and it replaced an old New England meeting-house which for ninety-six years had stood on the training-field in the centre of the town. Thus, when this meeting-house of 1732 was removed in 1828, the visible emblem which connected the modern with the colonial town may be said to have disappeared. The connecting link between two chains was broken. The period, therefore, of one hundred and eighty-nine years which elapsed after the gathering of the First Church of Braintree, and before the pulling down and moving away of the third meeting-house in Quincy, must historically be considered by itself. It was not the less one and the same period because during it the colonies were severed from Great Britain, and Quincy was severed from Braintree. These, so far as the people who lived at what in 1635 was known as the Mount were concerned, were both mere political changes, scarcely affecting to a degree outwardly perceptible the occupations of those people, or their modes of life and thought, or their social and material condition. The real elements of change in all these respects were not political; nor had they begun to make their presence felt when the eighteenth century came to its close. Thirty years later it was no longer so. The Granite railway was built in Quincy in 1826; the first Massachusetts railroad company was incorporated in 1830. These events marked epochs. They from top to bottom altered in America, as in Europe, — and at "the Mount" as in Massachusetts, — that which French and Indians wars, and wars of independence, and church and municipal divisions, had affected scarcely at all.

The long period from 1640 to 1830 was therefore with the Massachusetts towns the primitive period, — that of formation. Though it led directly to the present, it had little in common with the present. Nevertheless, during that period five generations lived on the soil, and were buried in it. Concerning them there was, as a rule, little more to record. A simple, laborious, unaggressive race, they were born and died; each following generation much the same as the generation which preceded it. Wealth and population increased slowly. With vessels of the same build, they fished familiar seas; with

similar utensils, they cultivated the same fields. They dwelt in houses built on an identical plan, and preserved the old domestic and social customs. The outer world made itself little felt in the remote village community; and the village community in no way influenced the outer world. Few elements of change existed, and accordingly little change took place. The Quincy of 1830 was only the Braintree of 1640, a little more thickly peopled and a little more prosperous.

The social and material conditions of the town during this period of one hundred and ninety years will be treated in another chapter. Meanwhile the year 1830 brought the early theological period to a close. Up to that time the history of the parish was practically the history of the town, and until 1820 town and parish were legally one. The history of the church must, therefore, first be told.

In September, 1739, the Rev. John Hancock, father of the patriot and then the North Precinct minister, preached two century sermons in the meeting-house removed in 1828, but which then was new. In one of these sermons he said, — "This is the third house, in which we are now worshipping, that we and our fathers have built for the public worship of God." There is reason to suppose that the second of these three houses was built in the year 1666, as the quaint old weather-vane which surmounted it is still in existence, and bears that date. Of the first Braintree meeting-house, — that in which Wheelwright probably preached, as beyond doubt did Fiske and Flynt, — mention is made in the records, but there remains of it no detailed account or description. It is merely certain that it was completed, and in use, before the month of May, 1641, as it is referred to in an entry of that date, upon the second page of the Braintree records, as a familiar, recognized landmark, standing near the end of a short bridge even then referred to as "old." It has already been said that this house "for the public worship of God" was probably built during the summer of the year 1637 for the use and under the supervision of John Wheelwright. Possibly it may have been even older than this, and already serving as the "Chappel of Ease" at Mount Wollaston on that day of fast at the end of May, 1637, when, as Winthrop records, Vane and Coddington, to empha-

size their dissent from the methods of their opponents, ignored the Boston assembly, and went "to keep the day at the Mount with Mr. Wheelwright." This, it will be remembered, was a time of great excitement, — the midst of the theological complications to which the meetings at the house of Mrs. Hutchinson had given rise, and the political struggle which grew out of them; and only one week before the day of fast, that charter election had been held beneath the great oak on Cambridge Common when the Boston party sustained its decisive defeat, and Winthrop was again chosen Governor in place of Vane; a little more than four months had elapsed since Wheelwright had delivered himself of the now famous Fast-day sermon in Wilson's meeting-house and before the church of Boston, and he had already been summoned to appear before the General Court and answer for it; a little more than two months later Vane was to depart for England; and, in the following November, Wheelwright himself was doomed to go into exile. It may well be that the Fast-day services of 1637, on what is now reckoned as the 3d of June, were the first ever solemnized within those newly erected walls, standing that day fresh from the hands of the builders; while Vane was there to lend dignity and interest to the event, as well as give public evidence of his sympathy with the preacher. If such perchance was the case, a new interest attaches to those walls, and to the church which within them, a little later on, began its organized life: John Wheelwright, the schoolmate and friend of Cromwell, the proscribed in two continents, there then preached in presence of young Harry Vane, moving steadily and fatefully forward from the chair of state in Boston to the block on Tower-hill.

Whether this was so or not, that first church edifice stood in 1640 on rising ground just south of the place where the principal travelled way of the little settlement — the way which a few years later became a part of the colonial coast-road connecting Boston and Plymouth — crossed a brook, then and subsequently known as the Town River. At the time the first meeting-house was built, the road could have been hardly more than a well-beaten trail, for it was not formally laid out until at least seven years later, in 1648. The brook, which

for some distance higher up had forced its way through a well-nigh impenetrable tangle from which the larger forest animals had hardly vanished, and which yet swarmed with reptile life, here flowed over a hard gravel bottom between two converging bits of upland. It was a fording place, — a natural point of crossing. For that reason the meeting-house was put there. It was a point convenient for those living on both sides of the water-course.

The meeting-house stood in the open, and when the “country highway” from Weymouth to Dorchester was formally laid out, in 1648, it here diverged, passing the building at both its ends, for it faced east and west. The diverging ways then shortly turned and joined again. At no great distance from the front of the meeting-house, looking westward, lay the tangled bottom through which the Town River sluggishly crept. Beyond this, and half a mile or so away, rose the rough, heavily-wooded granite hills. To the east there stretched a broad, and comparatively level, upland plain in the direction of Hingham and Weymouth. This also, at no great distance, was broken by the underlying syenite, which thrust itself boldly up in savin-covered heights. About a third of a mile further up the Town River stood the mill of Richard Wright, to whom a monopoly in grinding corn had been conceded; and from this mill, leaving the church on the left, there ran a way to the landing-place on the Town River, near the seashore. Such in 1640 was the centre of the town, and the only thoroughfares in it.

In the humble church edifice, which, nevertheless, was “as fair a meeting-house” as that people could provide, William Tompson, “a very holy man, who had been an instrument of much good at Accomenticus,” was formally ordained as first regular minister. At that time the gathering of a new church was a great event in Massachusetts, — another candle was lighted in the tabernacle; nor was it a thing of frequent occurrence. That at Braintree, it has been noticed, was only the fifteenth since the settlement, and, while three had been gathered in 1635, one only, that at Concord, had been added to the number in 1636; another, that at Dedham, in 1638; and none at all in 1637. The gathering at the Mount also was

a special occasion. A true church — one to which none but orthodox doctrines were to be preached — was to be established in the Antinomian hot-bed. The last vestiges of the banished Wheelwright's teachings were to be eradicated, and his flock, renouncing "the devil, the wicked world, a sinful flesh, with all the remnants of Anti-Christian pollution wherein sometimes we have walked, and all our former evil ways," were to become members of the common fold. The event was one of exceptional interest.

There is no record either of those who were present, or of those who took part in the services. Winthrop noted the event in his journal, but there is nothing to indicate that either he or Dudley, during that year Governor and Deputy-Governor, were there. Probably Peter Hobart, that "bold man who would speak his mind," came over from Hingham; while from Dorchester came Richard Mather, together with his young associate, John Wilson, son of the pastor of Boston, and himself just graduated from Cambridge. The Rev. John Allen may have found his way through the forest paths from Dedham, as Wilson and Cotton sailed across the bay from Boston. Earnest, devout men, they gathered from far and near in the primitive wilderness meeting-house on that September day, and there extended the right hand of fellowship to the little congregation who now covenanted one with another "to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth, and to walk in brotherly love." The church then founded was destined to centuries of unbroken existence.

The pastorate of William Tompson extended through a period of nineteen years. He is represented by the writers of his own time as having been "a very powerful and successful preacher," and one "abounding in zeal for the propagation of the gospel;" but he was likewise of a very melancholic mien and of a crazy body," and his ministry at Braintree can be accounted successful neither for himself nor his people. A graduate of Oxford, and belonging to that earliest generation of New England clergymen who had been settled over English churches, Tompson had resigned the living in Lancashire, of which he was the incumbent, in order to come to New England, and had landed in Boston at about the time the Antino-

mian Synod of 1637 was sitting. Settled at Braintree in September, 1639, in the following March Henry Flynt was ordained as teacher of his church, which would seem to indicate that the pastor from the very beginning proved unequal to the performance of all his duties; for the teacher in the early New England churches was practically an associate pastor, and it is not likely that a small and poor community, such as Braintree then was, assumed without reason the support of two ministers. In any event the society seemed not unwilling to allow Mr. Tompson to seek other fields of usefulness, and in 1642 his brother ministers selected him with two others to go forth on a strange sort of missionary service among the Church of England heathen of Virginia; for a cry had come up from "many well-disposed people, . . . to the elders here, bewailing their sad condition for want of the means of salvation, and earnestly entreating a supply of faithful ministers, whom, upon experience of their gifts and godliness, they might call to office." So far from turning a deaf ear to this call, the Massachusetts elders, to whom it was made, "accounted it no small honor that God had put upon his poor churches here, that other parts of the world should seek to us for help in this kind;" and so, the letters from Virginia having been "openly read in Boston upon a lecture day, the elders met, and set a day apart to seek God in it." This done, they made choice, for the work in hand of three of their number "who might most likely be spared;" and among the three was Mr. Tompson, his church having two ministers. Accordingly, on the ^{7th}/_{17th} of October, 1642, Mr. Tompson set out for Taunton, the first stage on the way to Virginia, in company with the Rev. John Knowles of Watertown, "a godly man and a prime scholar," who only, besides himself, accepted the call.

Their journey was over what now is a familiar route, for they were "to meet the bark at Narragansett;" in other words, they were to go to Norfolk, in Virginia, by way of Newport and New York, or Aquidneck and New Amsterdam, as those places were then called. The "bark" referred to was probably one of the sloops or ketches of those days,—little one and two masted crafts used in the coasting trade,—and George Fox has described how, thirty years later, he made the same

voyage from Newport to New York, coming to anchor one night before Fisher's Island, where "there fell abundance of rain, and our sloop being open, we were exceeding wet." In the case of the missionaries of 1642, it was nearly three months before they reached their destination; for at first they were wind-bound in Narragansett Bay, and then, in passing through Hell-Gate, their boat was swept upon the rocks and so damaged that they barely succeeded in reaching the neighboring shore. Cotton Mather, in the verses already quoted from, says of *Tompson* in this emergency, —

"Upon a ledge of craggy rocks near stav'd,
His Bible in his bosom thrusting, sav'd;
The Bible, the best of cordial of his heart,
'Come floods, come flames,' cry'd he, 'we'll never part.'"

The shipwrecked missionaries received "slender entertainment" at the hands of Governor William Kieft, the Dutch commandant at New Amsterdam, who indeed had no fondness for New Englanders; but Isaac Allerton, formerly of Plymouth though then of New Haven, chanced to be there, and exerted himself greatly on behalf of his countrymen. Through his assistance another pinnace was procured, and in the dead of winter the three ministers set sail for Virginia. They encountered much foul weather, and the difficulty and danger through which they reached their destination caused them to entertain grave "question whether their call were of God or not." Once in Virginia, they were "bestowed in several places" where they "found loving and liberal entertainment;" and the change to another and less rigorous climate seems to have proved most beneficial to Mr. *Tompson*, who wrote back to his friends that he was better in health and spirits than at any time since he came over from England.

But Virginia has never proved a fruitful field for New England workers, whether religious or political, and the civil authorities there now looked askance at this earnest attempt at propagandism. Accordingly they soon put a stop to the public preaching of the newcomers, on the ground that they did not conform to the orders of the Church of England. Yet, if we can believe the report made on their return by the missionaries, the people, "their hearts being much influenced

with an earnest desire after the gospel," continued to resort to them in private houses; seeing which, the rulers "did in a sense drive them out, having made an order that all such as would not conform to the discipline of the English Church should depart the country by such a day."

The summer of 1643 accordingly found Mr. Tompson and his associates back with their New England flocks; nor can their Virginia labors have been accounted fruitful, inasmuch as they seem to have made but a single convert. He, Daniel Gookins by name, followed his teachers back to Massachusetts, where at a later day he became a man of note; so that as Cotton Mather tunelessly expressed it,

"by Tompson's pains,
Christ and New England a dear Gookins gains."

During his absence a severe bereavement had fallen on the unhappy Braintree clergyman. He had left his wife, who is described as "a godly young woman and a comfortable help to him," in charge of a family of small children, with scanty means of support. She died; and he returned to find his home broken up and his offspring scattered, though it is said they were "well disposed of among his godly friends." Marrying again some years later, the next glimpse which is obtained of Tompson is through Governor Winthrop's diary, and it is singularly illustrative of the time. In 1648 a synod met at Cambridge for the purpose of framing a code of church discipline. Before this representative gathering the Rev. John Allen, of Dedham, delivered a discourse which proved "a very godly, learned, and particular handling of near all the doctrines and applications" touching the matter in hand.

"It fell out about the midst of his sermon, there came a snake into the seat, where many of the elders sate behind the preacher. It came in at the door where people stood thick upon the stairs. Divers of the elders shifted from it, but Mr. Thomson, one of the elders of Braintree (a man of much faith), trod upon the head of it, and so held it with his foot and staff with a small pair of grains,¹ until it was killed. This being so remarkable, and nothing falling out but by divine providence, it is out of doubt the Lord discovered somewhat of his mind in it. The serpent is the devil; the synod, the representative of the churches of Christ in New England. The devil had formerly and lately attempted their disturbance

¹ A prong, or fork; obsolete.

and dissolution ; but their faith in the seed of woman overcame him and crushed his head."

The mental and physical benefit which Tompson derived from his sojourn in Virginia was but temporary, and as he advanced in years his infirmities grew upon him. He seems to have had a morbid tendency, which at times verged on insanity. Cotton Mather's explanation of this, and of the course of treatment adopted for its cure, is curiously suggestive. There were then no insane asylums.

"Satan, who had been after an extraordinary manner irritated by the evangelic labors of this holy man, obtained the liberty to sift him ; and hence, after this worthy man had served the Lord Jesus Christ in the church of our New English Braintree, he fell into that *Balneum diaboli*, 'a black melancholy,' which for divers years almost wholly disabled him for the exercise of his ministry ; but the end of this melancholy was not so tragical as it sometimes is with some, whom yet, because of their exemplary lives, we dare not censure for their prodigious deaths. . . . Accordingly, the pastors and the faithful of the churches in the neighborhood kept 'resisting of the devil' in his cruel assaults upon Mr. Tompson, by continually 'drawing near to God,' with ardent supplications on his behalf : and by praying always, without fainting, without ceasing, they saw the devil at length flee from him, and God himself draw near unto him, with unutterable joy. The end of that man is peace."

The meaning of this is that Mr. Tompson did not commit suicide, and towards the close of his life the cloud lifted from him. He died on the 10th of December, 1666, having resigned his pulpit in Braintree some seven years before. At the time of his death he was settled over the first church in Roxbury, — the church to which in the days of the Hutchinsonian controversy thirty years before, the Rev. Thomas Weld had ministered, — and in the records of that parish is this quaint entry : —

"12. 10^m 66. mr. William Tompson Pastor to the church at Braintree departed this life in the 69 year of his age. He had been held under the power of melancholy for the space of eight yeares. During which time He had diverse lucid intervalles, and sweet revivings, especially the week before he dyed, in so much that he assayed to go to the church and administer the Lord's supper to them, but his body was so weak that he could neither go nor ride." ¹

¹ *Roxbury Land and Church Records ; Sixth Rep. of Boston Rec. Com's*, 205.

In the copy of verses bestowed on Tompson in the *Magnalia* by Cotton Mather, after his usual wont in such cases, there is one line of unusual strength, in which, referring to the departed "light," whom Oxford "with Tongues and Arts doth trim," the writer speaks of his

"Tall, comely presence, life unsoil'd with stains"

though further on a grim and pitiful gleam is thrown on the treatment for insanity in vogue during the seventeenth century in lines which tell us that

"By his bed-side an Hebrew sword there lay,
With which at last he drove the devil away."

Both Tompson and his second wife would seem to have been lacking in the quality of thrift, and during the closing years of his life the former minister of Braintree was wretchedly poor, — so poor, indeed, that in March, 1665, a public collection was taken up for him in the Dorchester church, which amounted to £6 9s., "besides notes for corn, and other things, above 30s." In his own day William Tompson had the reputation of one "apt to forget himself in things that concerned his own good," because of his exceeding zeal; and but it was further intimated that his parishioners made for their minister "somewhat short allowance." Yet this does not seem to have been the case; for, in 1657, an official inquiry showed that Braintree, then containing about eighty families, allowed Messrs. Tompson and Flynt £55 each, "paid ordinarily yearly, or within the year, in such things as themselves take up and accept of from the inhabitants."¹ These salaries were the same that the Old South congregation in Boston then paid its two ministers, and not an inadequate support for the time. Possibly payments were in arrears, for in 1661, during the incapacity of her husband, there was a hearing at Cambridge on questions at issue between Mrs. Tompson and the deacons of the Braintree church; nor was the matter then disposed of, for in 1668 the widow presented a petition to the General Court, complaining of certain moneys due from the church to her late husband which were then withheld. The General Court seems to have referred the

¹ III. *Mass. Hist. Coll.* i. 50.

matter to the County Court, which named certain referees; two of whom were "Deacon Dyer of waymouth and Capt. Foster of Dorchester." Then at last "after a full debate of matters by both partys," it was agreed that the town should pay Mrs. Tompson "the just sum of forty pounds" in satisfaction of all demands, "only what is given in her last six bills she had liberty to get her due of each person which was in her bills set down legally by the Deacons."¹ Not without reason, therefore, Mather wrote of the dead clergyman, when at last he had "labored into rest,"

"His inventory then, with John's, was took;
A rough coat, girdle, with the sacred book."

The body of William Tompson lies in the old burying-ground of Quincy, and the original stone, bearing quaint witness to his learning, piety and force as a divine, still marks the spot. He left by his two marriages numerous descendants, both sons and daughters; but there is no trace of his lineage now to be found in the town over which first he ministered.

Teacher Henry Flynt, who became pastor on the resignation of Mr. Tompson in 1659, survived the latter only one year and four months, dying on the 27th of April, 1668. Born, it is supposed, in Derbyshire, England, he landed in New England in October, 1635, being then about twenty-nine years old. Coming over at the same time, if not in the same vessel, with young Sir Harry Vane, Henry Flynt seems to have been a political sympathizer of his, while theologically he was an ardent admirer of Cotton. Indeed, almost the only fact recorded of Flynt by Mather in the *Magnalia* is that, having twin sons born to him in 1656, he named them one John and the other Cotton, in memory of his revered mentor, who had then been four years dead; but Mather does not add that the children in question lived but a few weeks, for, born on the 16th of September, their deaths were registered on the 20th of the following November.² It has already been mentioned that Mr. Flynt, during the Anti-

¹ *Braintree Records*, 11.

² *Ib.* 633, 637.

nomian controversy, adhered staunchly to Wheelwright. Accordingly, though his name is appended as teacher to the Braintree church covenant of September 16, 1639, and Winthrop speaks of him as "a godly man" then ordained, it was not until the succeeding May that he made his submission to the General Court, acknowledging his sin in subscribing his name to the church of Boston memorial of March, 1637. As his formal ordination did not take place until March 17, 1640, it has been confidently surmised¹ that the postponement was in order to afford the distinguished young divine ample opportunity for recantation. If so he at last availed himself of it; but there is no reason to suppose that in doing so, he imitated the discreditable zeal which Cotton had already shown in the work of hunting down his former associates, though it was asserted that through the exertions of its new teacher Braintree was "purged from the sour leaven of those sinful opinions that began to spread," and if any such remained there they were very covert. Of Mr. Flynt's later doctrinal views nothing is known; it is simply recorded of him that in his day he bore "the character of a gentleman remarkable for his piety, learning, wisdom, and fidelity in his office." Unlike Mr. Tompson, the Flynts, husband and wife, appear to have been thrifty people, and the teacher died in comfortable circumstances. By his will he left the "great lot" of eighty acres granted to him by the town of Boston in 1640 to one son, and his dwelling-house, with the two lots it stood upon, to another son, both bequests subject to a life-estate in their mother, provided she remained unmarried. Then his will closed with this quaint provision:—"For the present, I know not what portion of my estate to assign to my wife, in case God call her to marriage, otherwise than as the law of the country does provide in that case, accounting all that I have too little for her, if I had something else to bestow on my children." Teacher Flynt's wife, whose maiden name was Margery Hoar, had evidently been a good and useful helpmeet to him; and indeed it is recorded, on the stone which marks the spot in the old graveyard where side by side they are buried, that, like her husband, descended from an "ancient and good" Eng-

¹ Savage, *note in Winthrop*, i. *247.

lish family, she was also "a gentlewoman of piety, prudence, and peculiarly accomplished for instructing young gentlewomen, many being sent to her from other towns, especially from Boston." Mrs. Margery Flynt died in March, 1687, having survived her husband nearly twenty years. During that period "God [did not again] call her to marriage."

Henry Flynt left a numerous family, though no descendants of his name now live in Quincy. It was a granddaughter of his, Dorothy, child of the Rev. Josiah Flynt, of Dorchester, who married Judge Edmund Quincy, of Braintree, and became the stock from which sprang a progeny than which none in Massachusetts has been more distinguished. A daughter of hers was that "Dorothy Q." whose name has been embalmed in the familiar verses written upon her portrait by one of her distinguished descendants in the Holmes family. From her, also, are descended the Wendells, the Jacksons, the Lowells, and the Quincys; and indeed it is from Josiah Flynt that the last-named family derives that given name which, handed down from generation to generation, is in Massachusetts almost conceded to them as a peculiar patronymic.¹ It was another Dorothy Quincy who in 1775 became the wife of John Hancock. The original Dorothy [Flynt] Quincy (1678-1737) dwelt in the house which Colonel Edmund Quincy built in Braintree in 1685, and which still remains one of the most interesting of all our colonial structures, quaintly typical of bygone times. In this house, still looking towards the brook, is the room in which Judge Sewall slept one rainy night in March, 1712. Next to it is the room still known as Tutor Flynt's chamber, for it was long occupied by Dorothy's brother Henry, for more than half a century a tutor at Harvard College and a fellow of the corporation through sixty-five years. To this day, indeed, the grandson of the old Braintree teacher is a tradition of the University. A genuine product of New England soil, his quaint manners and curt, dry sayings are repeated; nor are there many descriptions of Massachusetts life and manners in

¹ It was on some festive occasion wittily said of the Quincys that, while with other families the descent was from sire to son, in their case it was from 'Siah to 'Siah.

the last century more humorous and graphic than Judge David Sewall's account of his journey with "Father Flynt" from Cambridge to Portsmouth in June, 1754.¹ The old man was then in his eightieth year, but he took his "nip of milk punch," smoked his pipe, bore up when tumbled from his seat headlong into the road, and commented on men, women and things in a way which showed that age had neither dimmed his faculties nor impaired his digestion. He lived until 1760, and left behind him the reputation of "a man of sound learning, of acute and discriminating intellect; firm but moderate; steadfast in opinion but without obstinacy; zealous and faithful in the discharge of his various duties." He lies buried in the ancient graveyard close to the buildings of the college which he served so long.

After the death of Teacher Flynt the church of Braintree, to use the language of a subsequent pastor, "fell into unhappy divisions, one being for Paul, and another for Apollos (as is too often the case in destitute churches), and were without a settled ministry above four years." No definite account of the cause of strife in this case has come down. One party, it is apparent, was anxious to invite young Josiah Flynt, son of the deceased teacher, who, having graduated at Harvard a few years before, was now a minister and a candidate for settlement. Another party was strong in opposition to this choice, but the name of the person favored by it nowhere appears; unless, indeed, it was the Rev. Peter Bulkley, one of that family of divines which furnished its first minister to Concord. The contest was a heated one, in which "many uncomfortable expressions passed about." In the course of it things occurred which led some to suspect that the "sinful opinions" of John Wheelwright were perhaps not so covert in Braintree as had been asserted. That "sour leaven" may still have worked; for Mr. Josiah Flynt was openly charged with uttering "divers dangerous heterodoxies, delivered, and that without caution, in his public preaching." In view of this dissension, more than one day was set apart by the church "to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer," and at the frequent meetings there was much "uncomfortable debate," and at one

¹ *Proceedings of Mass. Hist. Soc.* xvi. (1878), 5-11.

of them at least "an awful division." A widespread scandal went abroad over these proceedings, and on the 25th of July, 1669, "God sent a very solemn, awakening message to the church" by the mouth of Mr. Eliot, possibly the son of the Indian apostle. But that did not prevent the church from meeting on the 21st of the following January, and acknowledging "several things scandalous and offensive, one to another." Finally it was determined to call a council of sister churches, and even then a debate took place, "wherein much provocation to God and each other did appear."

Wearied as well as distressed by the angry turmoil, Josiah Flynt at about this time received a call from the church at Dorchester, which he accepted; and there he remained until his premature death, in 1680. Meanwhile Braintree continued for nearly two years longer in a "destitute, divided state." At last things came to such a pass that in November, 1671, the County Court interfered. Taking into consideration "the many means that have been used with the church of Braintree, and hitherto nothing done to effect, as to the obtaining the ordinances of Christ among them," — taking this into consideration, the court ordered and desired Mr. Moses Fiske "to improve his labors in preaching the word at Braintree until the church there agree, and obtain supply for the work of the ministry." Mr. Fiske seems to have obeyed this command in the true church militant spirit. For he says, "Being ordered by the Court, and advised by the reverend Elders and other friends, I went up from the honored Mr. Edward Tyng's, with two of the brethren of this church sent to accompany me, being the Saturday, to preach God's word unto them." The next day, December 3, 1671, he took his place in the Braintree pulpit, and delivered his first discourse, not failing at the close of the afternoon service to apologize as to his coming. But so well did he on this occasion "improve his labors" that the next day "about twenty of the brethren came to visit him, manifesting (in the name of the church) their ready acceptance of what the learned Court had done, and thanking him for his compliance therewith." On the 24th of February, 1672, Mr. Fiske received a unanimous call from the weary church, and on the 11th of

the following September he was formally ordained ; or, as he himself phrased it, that was "the day of my solemn espousals to this church and congregation."

At the time of his ordination Mr. Fiske was thirty years old ; and his pastorate lasted thirty-six years, until his death, in 1708. It was also an important period in the history of the town and church, for during it not only was the second parish organized, but a small Episcopal society, one of the earliest in New England, was formed. Of the Rev. Moses Fiske himself, his religious tenets or intellectual force, not much has been handed down, though it was recorded of him that, through a pastorate of thirty-six years, he "was zealously diligent for God and the good of men, — one who thought no labor, cost or suffering too dear a price for the good of his people." One only of his numerous discourses is now known to exist, — that which he preached before the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, on June 4, 1694, the day of their annual election. Even this sermon never reached the dignity of print, but, in the original handwriting of its author, rests undisturbed in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

The manner in which the New England clergy intermarried, continually, so to speak, breeding-in, has often been remarked upon, and was certainly suggestive ; for, according to all known laws of generation and heredity, the result should have been of exceptional interest. That it was not, is probably due to the necessary limitations of theological development, of which, in New England, the Rev. Cotton Mather, perhaps, indicated the climax. Mr. Fiske was a case in point. Himself the son of a clergyman, he married successively two daughters of clergymen ; three of his own daughters — Mary, Anne and Margaret — married clergymen ; and two of his sons were clergymen. By his first wife, a daughter of Mr. Symmes, of Charlestown, Mr. Fiske had fourteen children. Through a period of nineteen years the unfortunate woman gave birth to infants on an average of one to each seventeen months, and two were born at separate births within a twelvemonth. Naturally, several of them died in early infancy ; and at last the mother was herself released by death from incessant child-

bearing. Such cases were not unusual in early New England, and of Mrs. Sarah Symmes, the grandmother of Mrs. Fiske, it is recorded that "her courage exceeded her stature and she raised up ten children to people this American wilderness." She was the mother of thirteen. By his two marriages, Mr. Fiske had sixteen children ; yet his family was small compared with that of Samuel Bass, the senior elder of his church, who died in 1694, after having sat in the deacon's seat for more than fifty years, and since the first organization of the church. At his death Deacon Bass numbered an offspring of one hundred and sixty-two souls ; while among his contemporaries and the parishioners of Mr. Fiske, Henry Neal was the father of twenty-one children, and William Rawson had at one time twenty living sons and daughters, the fruit of his loins by a single wife.

The simplicity of life and the severe economy habitual in those days is shown in the fact that Mr. Fiske brought up his family of sixteen children, sending three sons to college and marrying off his daughters, on a stipend which never exceeded ninety pounds a year, and which was usually sixty or eighty pounds, payable in part in corn and wood at stated valuations, or, as was expressed in the vote of the year 1704, "in money or in Indian corn at Two shillings and six pence per bushel, and barley molt at Two shillings and six pence per bushel or in other good merchantable pay at money price." Even this small salary seems to have been a source of contention, and in 1690 it was grudgingly paid upon the pastor's receipt in full "from the beginning of the world to this day." Yet the parish had then increased greatly both in substance and population. The original meeting-house had long before given place to a new and larger one, built of stone and furnished with a bell ; and in 1694 the town made provisions for sweeping out the church and ringing the bell, appropriating twenty-five shillings to pay therefor, the bell, which weighed about two hundred pounds, being uncovered upon the roof until 1714, when a turret was built to shelter it. Until about the year 1700 there were no pews in the meeting-house, the congregation sitting on benches, the men on one side and the women on the other. This thoroughly democratic system

continued in use until about the year 1690, when, from habit or other cause, a sort of prescriptive right in particular persons to certain seats had become recognized. Accordingly, in 1694 the town authorized the selectmen to "seat the meeting-house." The task, involving as it did all sorts of questions of preference, must needs have been an ungrateful one, and nothing seems then to have been done; but in March, 1698, a special committee of five, including the two deacons, was appointed to attend to the business. "They did the work," though, as would naturally be supposed, "not to general satisfaction. The first Sabbath in April people took their places, as many as saw good so to do." Then, through a process of natural development and by stages which will presently be described, came the division into pews, each party who obtained a permit so to do fencing off at his own cost the space in the common meeting-house allotted to him; after which, of course, the equality of mankind no longer obtained in the presence of the Lord, though, for the poor and lowly, provision, such as it was, continued always to be made. A place in which to worship God, — suitable, no doubt, though obscure, — was always assigned to them.

When in 1700 the new century began, the parish numbered about one hundred and forty families, representing an entire population of not far from eight hundred souls; but those composing this population no longer dwelt together in the neighborhood of Mount Wollaston and about the stone meeting-house. They were scattered over a wide extent of territory; and this fact led to those bitter contentions in the original church which, recalling the evil days preceding Mr. Fiske's pastorate, saddened its closing years. In point of fact, town and parish were passing through a natural stage of growth. That was being enacted on a small stage in Braintree which, when enacted on the larger stage of nationality, forms the most interesting part of history. A process of differentiation was going on, and that process, before it completes itself, is apt, on the smaller as on the larger stage, to call forth a great deal of human nature. It certainly did so in the case of Braintree.

The struggle seems first to have assumed definite shape

about the year 1695. The old meeting-house was then pronounced inadequate to the growing needs of the parish. It was small, inconveniently situated, and out of repair. Those dwelling in the south part of the town complained that it was "very irksome, especially in winter, to come so far as most of them came to meeting, and through such bad ways, whereby the Lord's day, which is a day of rest, was to them a day of labor rather." Accordingly, the first proposition was that a new and larger church edifice, sufficient for the whole town, should be built at a more central point. This did not meet the views of old Colonel Edmund Quincy and others, who lived in the northern limits; consequently they went to work to prevent anything being done at all, and at a private meeting held at Colonel Quincy's they "did agree among themselves to shingle the old house, pretending to be at the whole charge themselves." But, none the less, "several pounds were afterwards gathered by a rate upon the whole town."

The project of a new and common meeting-house at a more generally convenient site having been defeated by means such as this, the organization of a separate church was next agitated. This was opposed, for the reason that such a secession from the parish would throw the burden of the minister's salary on a smaller number. Accordingly in 1704-5 party feeling ran high. Two church meetings were held in January, whereat there was "much debate and some misapprehension about church discipline," by reason whereof there was "much sinful discourse" in the town. "Nine of the church withdrew from the Lord's table," and one of Parson Fiske's adherents pathetically remarked, as he noted down these events, "the disorders among us call for tears and lamentations rather than to be remembered."

Getting no satisfaction, but, on the contrary, being "squib'd and floured by several of the other end of the town," those of the south part in the winter of 1705 began to talk "very hotly of building a meeting-house by themselves;" and on the 2d of May, 1706, the frame of the new edifice was raised. In the autumn of that year it was so far finished that they might comfortably meet therein. The matter had been "hitherto carried on in a way of great contention and disorder;"

but a final difficulty, and the most serious of all, now presented itself. The people of the south had organized themselves into a new church, but the people of the north wholly declined to release them from their share of the burden of supporting the minister of the old church. An angry town-meeting was held to consider this matter on November 25, 1706, and the seceders certainly made what seems now a fair and even a liberal proposition. They offered to maintain their own church, and also to pay £20 of Mr. Fiske's salary. Even this was not satisfactory, and the town insisted that their "south end neighbors and brethren should not be released from bearing their usual part of the charge for the support of the Rev. Moses Fiske, which they were forward in the day of it to vote for and agree to."

The matter was then carried before the General Court; but there no immediate action was taken, and in the spring of 1707 the contention and disorder were greater than ever. A council of churches was suggested, and agreed to on the 27th of April. Accordingly, on the 7th of May delegates from nine neighboring parishes met within the stone walls of the old Braintree meeting-house and listened to the aggrieved brethren. Those composing this council do not seem to have succeeded in pouring oil on the troubled waters; and, on the 10th of the following September, the Rev. Hugh Adams was formally ordained as first pastor of the South Church, which forthwith petitioned the General Court to be regularly set off as a distinct precinct. This prayer was dated in the true theological spirit of the time, — "From (Naphtali, if your honors please so to name our neighborhood, or) South Braintree;" the significance of which grim Puritan jest is found in Genesis (xxx. 8): — "And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali." Nevertheless, the dwellers in the south did not prevail on this occasion, for five days later, after an oral hearing, the General Court voted that, during the exercise of his ministry by Mr. Fiske, "the whole town" was obliged, in conforming with the provincial law then in force, to raise annually whatever sum was voted for his support. Meanwhile steps were to be taken towards form-

ing a second precinct, the inhabitants of which, during Mr. Fiske's ministry, were "to take care by subscription to raise a maintenance for the minister there."

It is, of course, obvious now that the separation proposed was a mere question of time. Considering how universal and even obligatory church attendance then was, the cause for present wonder is that through more than sixty years the people of so large a territory were content to travel, summer and winter, such distances over their primitive roads to reach the common meeting-house. It is doubtful whether even the intense religious sense of the period, backed though it was by both spirit and letter of law, would have induced them to do so, had they not been impelled by the desire to gratify a social, as well as a spiritual, craving. The Sabbath and the meeting-house were all they had to relieve the monotony of week-day existence. In their widely-separated houses were no newspapers, fewer books, and fewer still strange faces; and so they eagerly went to meeting unmindful of weather or of distance, because there they met friends and relatives, while between the services they gossiped over the news. Whispers might then reach them, also, of events in that great outside world from which they in their homes were as much excluded as though they had lived encircled by a Chinese wall.

The separation of old Braintree into several church precincts also foreshadowed a further political separation not less desirable. But the slow course of growth and sequence of events during the colonial period of New England life is a characteristic of that time and people to which attention will frequently be called in the course of this narrative, for it contrasts strangely with what this generation has been accustomed to in more recent times and in other parts of the country. Nowhere is the slowness of the pace at which that people were content to move more strikingly illustrated in the case of Braintree than by the fact that, while sixty years of development preceded the separation of the parishes, nearly ninety years more had to pass away before the original town was divided. And it is also noticeable that, as will presently be seen, while the North Precinct of the town in 1706 offered such resistance as it could to the earlier church dismember-

ment, in 1792 it was the same North Precinct which demanded to be set off, and which, though itself the original town, then left name and records with its younger sister, so it might be at liberty to order its municipal affairs in its own way.

Though foiled in its efforts for complete independence before the General Court of 1707, the South Precinct had not long to wait. The court had held it liable for its share of the support of the pastor of the old church during the ministry of Mr. Fiske only. Mr. Fiske's second wife, Anna, died on the 24th of July, following this decision. The widow of Daniel Quincy, a peculiar interest attaches to Mrs. Fiske as the mother of that John Quincy, of Mount Wollaston, from whom the North Precinct subsequently took its name as a town, and who, a youth of eighteen, graduated at Harvard College during the summer in which his mother's death took place. Parson Fiske did not long survive his wife. At the time of her death he seems to have been in feeble health, and a few days later he was stricken with "a sore malignant fever, and on the 10th day [of August], being Tuesday, about one of the clock, P. M., he died, willingly, patiently, blessed God, and forgave all his enemies. . . . He was, with suitable solemnity and great lamentations, interred at Braintree in his own tomb the 12th day." Of him an humble but devout parishioner wrote that he was "a diligent, faithful laborer in the harvest of Jesus Christ; studious in the Holy Scriptures, having an extraordinary gift in prayer above many good men, and in preaching equal to the most, inferior to few."

Mr. Fiske's death was timely in one respect. It settled once for all the vexed question of parish division. On the 3d of November following, a town and parish meeting was held, at which it was voted that thenceforth "there should be two distinct precincts or societies in this town, for the more regular and convenient upholding of the worship of God." The ill-feeling which had existed between the sections then gradually passed away; though, as late as 1710, the good offices of neighboring ministers seem to have been called for, and on the 19th of February their "advice for reconciliation" was read from the pulpit. As usual in the Massachusetts of that

time, a special fast was thereupon ordered "on account of the late disturbances;" and then at last, on March 19th, the Sabbath, the reconciliation was made complete by the clergymen of the two precincts exchanging pulpits, and preaching each to the other's congregation.

The pulpit of the First Precinct was then filled by Mr. Fiske's successor, the Rev. Joseph Marsh. His pastorate and that of the Rev. John Hancock covered, respectively, sixteen and eighteen years, and the two carried the history of the church into its second century. It was an uneventful time the world over, that of the first two Georges and Louis XV. The Massachusetts colony had now struggled through the more interesting early period, and, slowly as unconsciously, was preparing itself for the career which a century later was to open before it. Meanwhile the royal Governors — Shute and Dummer, Belcher and Burnet — ruled a community numbering about an hundred thousand souls, and squabbled incessantly over petty questions with intractable General Courts. Locally, it was the period in which Judge Edmund Quincy and Colonel John Quincy flourished in Braintree, and largely directed the course of the town's affairs; while of men destined to a later prominence, John Adams and John Hancock were born, the former at the foot of Penn's Hill, on October 19, 1735, and the latter on the 12th of January, 1737, in a house then standing on the lot which, now the site of an academy, still bears the Hancock name. The house can yet be seen, though no longer on its original site or an almost perfect specimen, as once, of the colonial dwelling, in which lived the Rev. Moses Fiske, and, after his death, the Rev. Joseph Marsh, his successor and son-in-law; and in that house, during the Hancock pastorate, John Adams and Josiah Quincy, Jr., went to school to the son of Mr. Marsh.

The Rev. Joseph Marsh himself was ordained as pastor of the First Precinct on May 18, 1709. A graduate of the college in the class of 1705, during the winter of 1708-9 he was preaching, by request of the General Court, at Tiverton, the inhabitants of which place had failed to "comply with the law and provide themselves with a minister." He first "exercised" in Braintree on Sunday, October 31, 1708, less than

three months after Mr. Fiske's death, and seems at once to have impressed himself on the people there as "a person of singular accomplishments, both natural and acquired." Accordingly, in November they gave him a call, and on the 16th of December, after extensive preparations had been made to properly receive him at his predecessor's house, "he came at night attended with the most of the inhabitants of this precinct." His salary was fixed at seventy pounds a year, and one hundred pounds additional was voted to him on his settlement, "and that to be paid for said settlement." Then on the 4th of May a special fast was kept "in order to ordination," which took place two weeks later. On the 30th of the following June the young pastor married the daughter of his predecessor, and in April, 1710, he bought the Fiske homestead, where he lived until his death, in March, 1726. He was then in his forty-first year.

Again the pulpit was but a short time vacant, for, on June 29th, John Hancock, the son of a father of the same name, was called to fill it. John Hancock, the father, was minister at Lexington, and so high was his professional standing and so great his influence that he was commonly known as "Bishop" Hancock. The son may have enjoyed a certain clerical prestige from the father's fame, for when called to Braintree in 1726 he was but twenty-four, though he had graduated in 1719. The salary voted to him (£110) was larger than had been given to any of his predecessors, and he received a further sum of £200 upon his settlement. But the vote giving these larger sums was expressed in ominous words, for it ran that the obligations were payable "in good and lawful bills of public credit on this Province." The colony was embarked on that troubled sea of depreciated paper money which was destined to long outlast the Hancock pastorate. In Mr. Hancock's letter accepting the call there is, also, one singular passage, now worth quoting. The young candidate had expressed in the usual language of the day his sense of the "seriousness, solemnity and affection" of the occasion, and his belief that "Divine Providence calls and obliges me to an acceptance;" he then suddenly adds, immediately before closing his letter, "I would just take leave

to recommend to your consideration the article of wood, which I understand is, or is likely to be pretty dear and scarce in this place." The result showed that this innocent-looking proviso was not devoid of either significance or worldly wisdom, for, some six or seven years later, in March, 1733, the precinct was called upon to vote that "twenty Pounds be raised . . . and added yearly to the Revnd John Hancocks Sallery to supply him with fire-wood yearly During his Ministre;" and "against this vote Mr. Benjamin Neal entered his dissent."

The ordination of Mr. Hancock took place on the 2d of November, 1726, and was a great occasion, for the pastors of seven sister churches took part in it, while the elder Hancock preached the sermon. The ceremonies were held in the old stone meeting-house of 1666. It must even then have been in poor repair, for during the winter of 1730 "cartloads of snow" were blown into it, and had to be shovelled out. As usual, it was not difficult to get the parish to vote the building of a new meeting-house; the trouble came in its location. Two meetings barely sufficed for the discussion of the question. The site first proposed was "at Col. Quincy's gate."¹ This was rejected. The site of the old stone church was next proposed, and rejected. Finally it was decided by a majority vote that the new edifice should be "at the ten milestone, or near unto it;" and at the next meeting an exact site was fixed "on the training-field," a few hundred yards south of the tenth milestone from Boston. The new house, large and commodious for the time, was in point of fact a bald, oblong wooden structure, of the kind common to all New England towns. It was entered by doors at the two sides, and in front of it stood a tower, surmounted by an open cupola in which hung the bell, now increased in weight to two hundred and ninety pounds. Apparently the ringing of this bell on all possible pretexts and occasions was one of the amusements of the youth of the town, for immediately after the new meeting-house was finished it was formally ordered by vote of the Precinct "that the Saxton let the key . . . goe to None but

¹ The point where the Old Colony Railroad now passes under Adams Street, between the old Quincy and the old Adams houses.

grave Persons that he Can Confide in, and that the Bell be rung but only at the usual times of Ringing said Bell." This edifice was dedicated on the 8th of October, 1732, "in peaceable times;" and it was voted "that Jonathan Webb keep the key of the old Meeting house have the Caire of said house take down the glass and led of the windows of said house for the service of the Precinct and Naile Bords up at the Windows." Yet, though thus stripped and abandoned, the ancient edifice in which two generations of the inhabitants of Braintree had Sabbath by Sabbath assembled still had its uses, for in it both town and precinct meetings were held, summer and winter, for fourteen years to come, and it was not until 1748 that the structure was finally sold at auction and removed; and that it should have thus stood there, an unsightly ruin, serving, through sixteen years, almost no useful purpose, is significant of the slow growth and inanimate condition of the Massachusetts town during the first half of the seventeenth century. When sold at last, the material of the building brought £100 in money of the old tenor, or, on the basis of conversion fixed by law two years later, about \$55 of modern money. Meanwhile, nine years before, on September 16, 1739, "being Lord's day, the First Church of Braintree, both males and females, solemnly renewed the covenant of their fathers, immediately before the participation of the Lord's supper." A century of church life was complete.

On this occasion, in his discourse which is still extant, the pastor described himself as having been with his people almost thirteen years "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." He continued with them five years more. These were the years of "the great awakening," during which Whitefield, Tennent and Davenport held forth continually to excited audiences, and New England was lashed into such a state of religious frenzy as was never known on the continent before or since. It is scarcely probable that Braintree wholly escaped the contagion of the craze; but when, shortly after reason had resumed its sway, Hancock died, the brother clergyman who preached his funeral discourse spoke of him "as a wise and skillful pilot," who had steered "a right and safe course in the late troubled sea of ecclesiastical affairs;" so

that his people had "escaped the errors and enthusiasm which some, and the infidelity and indifferency in matters of religion which others had fallen into." These words were in themselves no poor tribute to the preacher cut off "in the midst of his days and growing serviceableness."

It was in 1728, the third year of the Hancock pastorate, that the first Episcopal church edifice in Braintree was finished, and on Easter Monday of that year services were performed in it. Dr. Ebenezer Miller, a Harvard graduate of 1722, was its rector, and for a century and a half thereafter descendants of his name continued to live in the town. Though it had no church of its own until 1728, this society had long been forming, and, as the result of careful investigation, one of its recent rectors has expressed a confident belief that Christ Church in Quincy, now that King's Chapel has changed hands, is, with the "exception, possibly, of Trinity Church, Newport, the oldest Episcopal parish in New England." There is, indeed, evidence that, as early even as 1689, there was in Braintree a little body of Church of England communicants, and that, in one house at least, prayers from the liturgy were daily read.¹ It was the head of this family, probably, who, as "L^t. Veazey," stands recorded in the 1689 list of those "sure, honest and well-disposed persons that Contributed their assistance for and towards erecting a Church for God's worship in Boston, according to the Constitution of the Church of England as by law Established."² "L^t. Veazey" put his name down for one pound. In 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was formed in London, and, for some reason now unknown, Braintree was early selected by it as a promising field in which to labor. In 1702 one zealous in the cause wrote to a leading church dignitary: — "Braintrey should be included; it is in the heart of New England, and a learned and sober man would do great good and encourage the other towns to desire the like. If the church can be settled in New England, it pulls up schisms in America by the roots, that being the fountain that supplies with infectious streams the rest of America." Accordingly, "an annual encouragement of fifty pounds and a gratuity of twenty-five pounds for present occa-

¹ Pattee, 245-6.

² Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, 89.

sions" was granted by the society to Mr. William Barclay, "the minister of the Church of England at Braintree in New England." At the same time a collection of books to form the basis of a church library was sent out, the twenty volumes or so of which, bearing the quaint seal¹ of the mother society, are still on the shelves of the Quincy rectory. Thus, in 1704, Christ Church in Braintree was fully organized, several of the names found earliest in the town records, such as Veazie, Saunders and Bass, being those of its wardens and vestrymen.

The movement did not pass unnoticed. The time was gone by when it could be suppressed with a high hand, for not only had the rigor of the primitive church discipline relaxed, but under the royal governors the Episcopalian ritual had for years been familiar in Boston; though still on the 25th of December those of the antique faith took occasion to "dehort their families from Christmas keeping and charge them to forbear." Accordingly when in August, 1704, the increase of the Rev. Mr. Fiske's salary from £80 to £90 was the burning question in Braintree, Colonel Edmund Quincy urged as an argument in favor of the increase that the Church of England people would have to pay their proportion, calling Samuel French out of Captain John Mill's house, and saying to him, — "You know what has fell out in the town, the churchmen are now scheming to get a foot in the town; if you will join with us in a vote, we'll suppress the churchmen; I have got sixteen already."

By 1704 Mr. Barclay had returned to England, and for several years thereafter only a skeleton organization of the church was maintained. In 1713 the case was pronounced desperate by the Rev. Thomas Eager, who had apparently been sent out to look the field over, and who mentioned, as obstacles in the way of any growth of the church, that its members were taxed for the support of the regular precinct minister, and that they had no place of worship of their own. They feared censure as conventiclors if they assembled for worship in a private house. Yet he claimed to have at times as many as thirty attendants at services, with twelve regular communicants. Mr. Eager seems to have remained in Brain-

¹ Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, 147.

tree nearly two years, and the account he gave of the dwellers there was not a flattering one. "I have had a very hard way of living since my abode in this place, provisions being very scarce, and people generally very poor. The whole province has been very much disturbed on the account of my coming to this place, and accordingly have not failed to affront and abuse me wherever they meet me, — 'atheist and papist,' the best language I can get from them. The people are Independents, and have a perfect odium to those of our Communion. These few which adhere to our church are taxed and rated most extravagantly to support the dissenting clergy. Had this province been called New Creet instead of New England it had better suited, for the people are very great strangers to truth, and I do really believe that I have not passed one day since my arrival without one false report or other raised upon me. Thus you see my case is very pitiful; yet by the assistance of God's grace I shall have constancy and resolution enough to put forward the good work that I was sent about."¹

On the other hand, judging by the statements contained in the following passage of a letter of Governor Dudley to the secretary of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, the Rev. Thomas Eager was by no means one of those "able and sober ministers" and "discreet" gentlemen such as Edward Randolph had in 1682 entreated the Bishop of London to appoint "to performe the officies of the church with us." Far otherwise, he would seem to have been a parson of a type not unfamiliar to the readers of Fielding and Smollett, — a man carnally inclined, and of a temper the reverse of meek. The letter of Governor Dudley was dated May 1, 1714, and in it he wrote: —

"There has been some trouble at Braintree about the arrear, which I hope is over also; but I have heard a sorrowful account from everybody referring to Mr. Eager. I had heard of his rude life in his passage hither, being frequently disguised in drink and fighting with the saylors, even to wounds and taring his cloaths; and during the few months of his stay here he was frequently in quarrels and fighting, and sending challenges for duells, that at length the auditory at Brantry were

¹ Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, 257-8.

quite ashamed and discouraged ; and he is gone to Barbadoes without any direction or order, and the Congregation without any Minister. General Nicholson has been here and seen the process of the affair as above."

But there was ground for the complaint of Mr. Eager as to the taxing of his people for the support of the precinct ministers. The matter had already been before the Governor and Council on the complaint of William Veazie, the churchwarden, who, in 1696, had been fined "for plowing on the day of Thanksgiving." Judge Sewall was a member of the Council at the time, and anything which savored of the liturgy was to him a thing abhorred, — the Common-Prayer was an "invention of man," the use of which in his presence he reckoned "an Indignity and affront," while the "Office for burial [was] a Lying, very bad office ; [making] no difference between the precious and the vile." So in his journal for June 2, 1713, he gave this quaint and instructive account of what took place in the Council Chamber on the complaint of Veazie, whose cow had been seized and sold because her owner had refused to pay his proportion of the tax ordered to be levied on account of the Rev. Mr. Marsh's salary : —

"Mr. Veisy, of Braintry, and constable Owen are heard ; about his distraining for a rate of twenty-six shillings towards Mr. Marshes Salary, when the Governor and Council had ordered him to forbear till the General Court, which order was sent by Veisy himself, who would not let Owen take a copy of him, and provoked him ; whereupon Owen took a cow of Veisy, prized at four pounds, offered Veisy the overplus before witnesses, which Veisy refused. The Governor put the Vote whether the Cow should be returned, which passed in the Negative. I said, the Governor and Council had not Authority to rescind the Laws by nulling an execution. Mr. Secretary seconded me. Then the Governor put it whether he should be bound over to the Sessions, which was Voted. Governor directed fifty pounds. But 'twas brought to ten pounds, and five pounds each Surety.

"It was afterwards thought advisable to dismiss this Bond, Chide him, and let him go, which was done next day, upon his Submission and petition to be dismissed."

The drinking and fighting parson Eager was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Lucas, who, after a short rectorship, removed to Newbury, and for several years thereafter the organization lay dormant ; nor, indeed, was it until 1726 that any steps

were taken toward building a church edifice. Ebenezer Miller, son of Samuel Miller, of Milton, was then a recent graduate of the college, and student of divinity. As such he early manifested a strong leaning towards Episcopacy, being, it has been said, the first graduate of Harvard who took that turn. To him the members of the Braintree society went, and two agreements were entered into, — one for the building a church edifice, the other for sending young Miller to England, there to receive orders. Both agreements were carried out. A site for the proposed edifice was conveyed by deed, bearing date of August 25, 1727, to the society, as the free gift of William and Benjamin Veazey, “for the building of a Church of England on, and no other purpose;” and, two years later, in the autumn of 1727, an unpretentious wooden structure had been erected, and was ready for occupancy. It stood near the main street of the town, and parallel with it, a few hundred yards only south of that crossing of the town river near which was the old stone meeting-house. For over a century, this building, from time to time enlarged, sufficed for the religious needs and shared in the fluctuating fortunes of those in Braintree and its vicinity who adhered to the Church of England faith and forms; and, in course of years, the ground about it grew thick with stones marking the last resting places of some who had worshipped within those walls. These stones still remain the sole memorial of a site upon which for over a hundred years stood one of the earliest offshoots in Puritan Massachusetts of that Established Church which Winthrop called “our dear mother, . . . acknowledging that such hope and part as we have obtained in the common salvation we have received in her bosom, and sucked it from her breasts.”

Receiving his degree of Master of Arts at Oxford in July, 1727, Mr. Miller was at the same time licensed to preach the gospel. The next month he was appointed to the living at Braintree, in New England, and, in September following, chaplain to the Duke of Bolton. It has been asserted that Dr. Miller — for in 1747 he again visited England, there receiving from Oxford the further degree of Doctor of Divinity — was the first native of Massachusetts to receive holy orders

in England under Episcopal forms ;¹ however this may be, he came back to his own people in the autumn of 1727 well recommended, arriving in season to begin his pastorate on Christmas-day. Accordingly, Judge Sewall, in Boston, made the following entry in his journal : — “ Monday, Dec. 25, 1727. Shops open, and people come to Town with Hoop-poles, Hay, Wood, &c. Mr. Miller keeps the day in his New church at Braintey : people flock thither.”

The vexed question of taxation was now at last settled. In the spring of 1727 it had again been brought before the Council, over which Lieutenant-Governor Dummer then presided during the interim between the Shute and the Burnet administrations ; and, in reference to it, Dummer wrote a sharp letter to Colonel Edmund Quincy, in which he said that he was “ surprised to find this matter driven to extremity, especially after the hopes you have raised in me that your people were thoroughly disposed to make those of the Church of England amongst you easy in all these matters.” He further requested Colonel Quincy to bring the matter before the parish committee, and personally to use his “ utmost influence that those people may obtain the relief they look for, as I think common justice entitles them to.” Accordingly, at a meeting of the North Precinct held on the 29th of the next month (May, 1727), the Episcopalians appeared and presented their case. There is no record of what was said in debate, but the meeting finally voted to remit future taxes, and also “ to reimburse the petitioners whatever sums they might have been assessed for Mr. Hancock’s ordination charge and settlement.”

This also was done, as Mr. Hancock did not fail to record with pride, “ before ever any act of this nature passed in the government.” That it was settled in a way so creditable seems to have been largely due to Mr. Hancock’s influence, who then gave evidence that he was possessor not only of some Christian spirit, but of much good judgment. He always cultivated friendly relations between the two societies, as well as personally between himself and Mr. Miller ; and before Dr. Miller came the precinct church “ admitted to

¹ Pattee, 249.

their communion all such members of the Church of England as desired to have occasional communion with them, and allowed them what posture of devotion they pleased; and they received the sacrament standing.”¹

But, though what had been a burning question through twenty-five years was thus properly disposed of, the disposition did not prove altogether final; for nearly twenty years later the old question presented itself in a new form, the almost necessary outcome of the law of compulsory contribution to religious worship as it then stood. The issue was now formally tried in court, and the precinct church not only won its case, but the result showed that litigation was far less costly in 1750 than it has subsequently become, inasmuch as the expense the committee appointed to take charge of the matter was at in “Attendance and Lawyers Fees” amounted “in the whole to the sum of £5/16.”

Through thirty-six years Dr. Miller remained the rector of Christ Church, devoted to his parish, and accounted one of the ablest defenders of Episcopacy in New England. At the close of his ministry the society numbered fifty families and as many communicants. Indeed, he and his immediate successor so raised the Braintree church that for a time it seems “to have exercised a maternal care over those of the same communion in this vicinity;”² and not impossibly the ante-revolutionary rectors of Christ Church in Braintree might have been ordained as Bishops, had a diocese of Massachusetts, or even of New England, then existed; but, not until 1784, was there any Bishop east of the Hudson. Meanwhile,

¹ That this liberality in regard to partaking of the communion was not confined to Mr. Hancock and the Braintree church, among New England congregations, is proved by the following from one of Cotton Mather’s publications. In his *Manuductio ad Ministerium*; or, *Angels preparing to Sound the Trumpets*, published in 1727, he said (p. 127), — “And let the *Table* of the Lord have no *Rails* about it, that shall hinder a Godly *Independent*, and *Presbyterian*, and *Episcopalian*, and *Antipedobaptist*, and *Lutheran*, from sitting down together there. *Corinthian Brass* would not be so bright a *Composition*, as the people of GOD in such a *Coalition*, feasting together on His *Holy Mountain*. . . . Tho’ in the church that I serve, I have seen the grateful Spectacle!”

² Cutler, *Century Sermon* (1827), 7.

on the 11th of February, 1763, "to the very great loss of this church, his family and friends, [Dr. Miller] departed this life."

Not much more remains to be said of Christ Church during the period now under consideration, — that to 1830. It had already seen its best days, for the Revolutionary troubles were at the time of its first rector's death already impending. Indeed, a posthumous attack made on him just after his death, because of his connection with a project for establishing an American bishopric, led to one of the angry paper controversies which paved the way to war.¹ The Rev. Edward Winslow, a Bostonian by birth and a graduate of the college in the class of 1741, succeeded Dr. Miller. He was inducted into the living in July, 1764, and his connection with the society lasted through thirteen troubled years, until 1777. He left behind him in Braintree the reputation of being an earnest, faithful rector and an honest man; but he was in his ministry at a time of great political excitement, and his was the vanquished side. And yet it may fairly be inferred that, for a time at least, the society did not languish under his charge, for the families belonging to it increased in number from fifty to sixty-eight, and in the year 1773 it was found necessary to enlarge and remodel the church building. At the time of Mr. Winslow's settlement, and probably as an inducement to him to accept of the living, the parish entered into an agreement with "the Venerable Society" by which the incumbent, the bulk of whose annual salary it paid, was to be provided with "a decent glebe (or rectory) for his accommodation." A sum of money exceeding £300 was accordingly raised by subscription among those locally interested in the church, and in 1765 a piece of land was bought and a house built, the rent of which at a later period sufficed to keep the abandoned church in decent repair, while the almost lifeless society awaited the return of better days.

Episcopacy has ever been an exotic in Massachusetts; and the cultivation of exotics is expensive for those engaged in it. The mother English society was always most liberal in dealing with its sickly Braintree offshoot, and, until the Revolutionary troubles took the shape of actual war, it annually sent

¹ John Adams, *Works*, x. 187.

over sixty pounds sterling for the support of the minister. Naturally the society was inclined to a friendly feeling toward the hand which fed it. To it the Apthorps, the Vassalls, the Borlands, the Cleverlys and the Millers — indeed, all the gentry of the neighborhood, with the exception of the Quincys — belonged. The gentry were apt to be Tories; and, as early as 1765, John Adams noted in his diary that most of the churchmen in Braintree were favorers of the Stamp Act. Ten years later they had not changed their views, and when the news arrived of the passage of the Quebec Bill by Parliament in April, 1774, Mrs. Adams wrote "all the Church people here have hung their heads," and, "no matter how much provoked by those of the other side, they would not discuss politics." Before that "parties ran very high, and very hard words and threats of blows upon both sides were given out." A few days later there was something closely resembling an actual outbreak in the town, the North Precinct of which had the reputation of being a nest of Tories. The stock of public powder was removed from it by an organized mob, and Mrs. Adams again wrote, — "The church parson thought they were coming after him, and ran up garret;" and the story was that another member of the church "jumped out of his window and hid among the corn, whilst a third crept under his board fence and told his beads." As it was in Braintree, so was it elsewhere; for this was the time when, throughout the colonies, the ministers of the Established Church of England stood condemned in the eyes of all patriots, — the time when a Pennsylvania rector wrote to England that a militia captain "had lugged his company to church on a fast day, to hear that old wretch (*meaning me!*) preach," — the time when "neither seclusion, insignificance nor high character was able to save the clergy from the fury of the populace."¹ Braintree did but share in the common feeling, and though, as will presently be seen, no record exists of any act of overt violence committed there, Mr. Winslow undoubtedly found his situation uncomfortable in the extreme, nor was it any longer safe for him to read the prayer for the King. Yet he seems to have struggled on, vainly

¹ McConnell, *Am. Episcopal Church*, 208-10.

hoping for better days, until his salary was stopped and many of his people had moved away. Then, in 1777, taking very properly the ground that his ordination oath compelled him to conform literally to the Prayer-Book, he, "with sad and silent musings," resigned his charge; while Mrs. Adams, actuated by the patriotic fervor of the day, wrote of him in a spirit marked with no excess of charity, — "The conscientious parson had taken an oath upon the Holy Evangelists to pray for his most gracious Majesty as his sovereign lord, and having no father confessor to absolve him, he could not omit it without breaking his oath." Going to New York, which was in British occupation, Mr. Winslow died there in 1780, before the close of the war. He lies buried under the altar of St. George's Church, in that city.

The English society had spent, it is said, over thirteen thousand dollars in the attempt to build up the Braintree church, and it was now less than ever able to stand alone. Though the ritual was again in as great public odium as it had been a whole century before, and the mutilated pages of the great book of services still in the possession of Christ Church bears curious evidence to the fact that the prayers for the King were no longer read in Braintree, Mr. Joseph Cleverly to a certain extent faced the storm, and filled, as best he could, the place Mr. Winslow had left vacant. A native of the town, and coming of a family long resident there, he had graduated at Harvard College in 1733, and, though never in orders, an earnest Episcopalian he now for several years read prayers and services, and is referred to in the church's records as its teacher. He lived to extreme old age, dying in 1802.

After Mr. Cleverly's death the society for many years continued in what might fairly be called a state of suspended animation. It did not wholly die, for the church edifice and the rectorship were there, and the rent collected from the latter sufficed to keep the former from tumbling down. The parish committee secured the assistance of clergymen and readers, so that from time to time church services were performed, and a few kindly disposed ladies exerted themselves to keep up a Sunday-school, at which the children not only of

that society but of the precinct were taught the catechism. But, as a religious force affecting town life, Christ Church hardly made itself felt between the close of the Revolution and the year 1825. It had during the period of its prosperity lived on support from without, and when that support was withdrawn the time of adversity came. Accordingly, with one period of faint revival between 1822 and 1827 under the fostering charge of a faithful and able rector, the Rev. B. C. Cutler, it continued to languish until long after 1830. At last the increase of wealth and the change in modes of life of the whole outside community brought in new and influential families, largely summer residents, introducing elements in which the Episcopal form of worship found natural support. But the town had then lost its individuality. During the first hundred years of its existence the history of Christ Church in Braintree and Quincy is most interesting as showing how foreign Episcopacy was to the original Massachusetts civilization; how practically impossible it was for it there to take root and to flourish; and how, supported for a time at great effort and cost from without, when that support was withdrawn it languished and died away, having, so far as could be seen, in no way influenced the growth of the native community. The Established Church of England, like that of Rome, was a wholly alien institution; and Episcopacy, like Roman Catholicism, secured a firm hold on the soil only when a new and an alien element was infused into the population of the Massachusetts town.

Returning to the history of the original precinct church, about which the whole religious life and mental activity of the town still centred, the Hancock pastorate, ending in May, 1744, was followed by an interim of a year and a half; and this notwithstanding the fact that, only two months after its pastor's premature death, the bereaved church had solemnly voted that "the Fifteenth day of August next be a day set apart for solemn fasting and prayer to God for his Direction in order to the settling a Minister among us." Before this invocation was answered, the church twice invited Mr. Benjamin Stevens to occupy the vacant pulpit, but he declined its call. At last, on the 16th of September, 1745, the Rev.

Lemuel Briant, of Scituate, was unanimously chosen pastor, and on the 11th of the following December he was formally ordained. The salary of the new minister was fixed at "fifty pounds per year in bills of credit on this province of the last emission" during the first two years of his settlement, to be thereafter increased by a further annual sum of "twelve pounds and ten shillings in bills of the like emission." This salary was considerably smaller than had been paid either to Mr. Hancock or to Mr. Fiske, but it was payable in bills of credit of the last emission. How clergymen and the few others who, in Massachusetts, were dependent on fixed incomes contrived to live in those days must always remain a mystery. At the time of Mr. Hancock's death, bills of the tenor in use when he was settled passed in circulation for about sixteen per cent. of their nominal value; in other words, silver was worth nearly forty shillings "old tenor" per ounce, instead of six shillings seven pence, as it should have been. In 1645 there were in circulation bills of the "new tenor," of the "middle tenor," and of the "old tenor;" and those of the two former emissions, being of greater value than those of the latter, were hoarded. Apparently, in 1788, Mr. Briant's salary of sixty pounds "new tenor" was equivalent to about fifty-four pounds in silver, or to six hundred pounds in "old tenor," and in purchasing power was not less than what had been paid to his predecessor. Nevertheless, owing to what the young pastor in his letter of acceptance not unhappily described as "the Fluctuating State of our Medium," it was in subsequent years found necessary to make frequent additions to his stated salary; though it may well be doubted whether even these additions, parsimoniously doled out after the custom of the period, placed Mr. Briant, as he had in the letter just referred to expressed his confidence would be the case, "above the fear of wanting any good thing among you, however insufficient to answer all the Purposes of Life what you have already Voted may be judged by those who are best Acquainted with Living in the World."

A graduate of Harvard College in the class of 1739, Mr. Briant, when he came to Braintree, was in his twenty-fourth year. His pastorate was brief, for he died before he was

thirty-three; but it was as troubled as it was short. While, intellectually, he was without doubt a noticeable man, there is reason to suppose, also, that he was a somewhat eccentric one. An advanced religious thinker and a born controversialist, he seems to have paid little regard to conventionalities. Had he lived he might have held his ground, and succeeded in advancing by one long stride the tardy progress of liberal Christianity in Massachusetts; on the other hand, not improbably he was too far in advance of his day, and a premature physical decline alone saved him from the loss of his pulpit and theological ostracism. Yet the story of his brief career is even now indisputably interesting.

In the year 1749, Mr. Briant published a sermon on moral virtue. Before its publication he seems to have preached it several times in different pulpits, and it had excited a good deal of remark. In his native town of Scituate, especially, it had produced so great an impression that the minister of that place had felt moved to controvert its teachings. This he had essayed to do by means of a series of discourses, in regard to which it was at the time remarked the main difficulty was to discern the "difference between his doctrine and that of Mr. Briant." The progress of religious thought has since been so great, that it is not easy now to see in the Briant sermon anything to excite remark. In it moral and religious truisms seem to be set forth in plain, strong English, which at times rises into eloquence; while throughout it is marked by the better quality of plain speaking. The writer said what he meant; and he said it in a way not to be misunderstood. He drew his text from Isaiah lxiv. 6, — "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," — and he proceeded vigorously to denounce the absurdities to which a lifeless, conventional religion had led. The distinctness with which he gave utterance to the truth that was in him startled those who had comfortably settled down in the uncomfoting faith that Calvinism was not only the foundation of all things, but that it was a good foundation. Once more accepted formulas had been challenged, and declared to be pernicious cant.

Formulas, and religious and educational formulas in particular, rarely lack defenders. Several of his brethren at once

entered the lists against Mr. Briant, and the theological rancor with which they did it was expressed on the title-pages, even, of the sermons in which they thought to confute him. The Rev. Mr. Niles, of the Middle Braintree Precinct, for instance, called his discourse a vindication of certain gospel doctrines and teachers "against the injurious reflections and misrepresentations" of the "Rev. Mr. Lemuel Briant;" and the Rev. John Porter, of Bridgewater, improved on this by entitling a sermon, — "The absurdity and blasphemy of substituting the personal righteousness of men in the room of the surety righteousness of Christ, in the important article of justification before God." Mr. Briant was not a man to be summarily suppressed. He was young, it was true, but so far his church was with him, and he had a vigorous pen. Accordingly, in 1750, he published, in the form of a letter, some "friendly remarks" on the Rev. Mr. Porter's effort, to which, in its printed form, had been appended an "attestation," as it was called, signed by five other clergymen, in which they expressed their hearty concurrence with their brother Porter, and dolefully lamented the "dreadful increase of Arminianism and other errors in the land."

This reply of Mr. Briant's must have been very irritating to his opponents, for he met them in a way they could not understand. They were narrow-minded men of no great intellectual strength, and, after the manner of such, they could not grasp a new idea even when it was plainly set before them. Because it was new, was with them sufficient proof that it must be unimportant or erroneous. Nevertheless, they were men thoroughly in earnest and of implicit belief. Briant in his reply trifled with them. Hardly troubling himself to conceal his contempt, he permitted a vein of irony to run through his answer, which, while it must have bewildered as well as exasperated his opponents, was out of place. The subject-matter under discussion should at least have made the discussion serious. As it was, he very distinctly, to use a modern word, chaffed his reverend critics.

Naturally they were not slow to respond, and, as is the custom of men of their calibre, they forthwith proceeded to identify themselves with the sacred cause of which they were

the self-appointed and incompetent advocates. They accused Mr. Briant of levity in the treatment of religious truths, and of prevarication; and they proceeded in their labored way to show that he was an Arminian and unsound. Mr. Briant had in his letter referred to the Rev. Mr. Foxcroft, the colleague of Dr. Chauncey in the First Church of Boston, as "a verbose, dark, Jesuitical writer," and, accordingly, Mr. Foxcroft now returned the compliment by accusing Mr. Briant of being not Arminian merely, but even Socinian. To this contribution to theological debate Mr. Briant speedily replied in a piece dated April 15, 1751, which he entitled "Some more friendly remarks on Mr. Porter and Company. In a second Letter to him and two of his abettors, namely, Mr. Cotton, appendix writer, and Mr. F—xcr—ft, marginal noter." The title alone is sufficient. In pointed controversy his opponents were no match for Mr. Briant, and he now fairly convicted them of having brought serious charges against him on the strength only of conjecture and suspicion; but the discussion had drifted away from great doctrinal issues to mere personalities, and it ceased to be of importance.

Yet it did not end then. Referring, in one of his notes to Winthrop, to some forgotten controversy of earlier days, Mr. Savage has alluded to what he calls "the exquisite rancor of theological hate." Mr. Briant seems to have stirred the small waters of local theology to their depth, nor did the agitation subside during the short remainder of his life. At the time of his second letter he was not yet thirty, but he was already drawing towards that decline which, only thirty months later, caused him to sever his connection with his parish. The closing months of Mr. Briant's short and stormy pastorate must have been very trying to him. Among his brethren he was not without sympathizers, and he counted the celebrated Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, of the West Church in Boston, as his intimate friend; but his controversial methods must have startled even those who believed as he did, and prevented their rallying to his support. Nor were his own people any longer undivided; for, while the majority sustained their pastor, some were greatly disturbed by his views. Through their agency an Ecclesiastical Council was called to consider the case of the

Braintree church. Mr. Briant declined to acknowledge the authority of the Council, or to be present at its sessions. It adjourned; but met again in January, 1753, and, Mr. Briant still declining to appear, it proceeded to take cognizance of his case. Eight causes of complaint had been preferred. They related to all grades of offence, from the sermon on moral virtue to whispers of "scandalous immoralities."

In their findings the Council expressed its opinion that there did exist grounds of complaint against the pastor, but it added the belief that the "aggrieved brethren," as the minority of the society was termed, had gone too far in their charges. The members of the Council concluded its report by giving "their best advices" to the two parties; thus, in the words of Mr. Briant's most eminent successor in the pulpit of the North Precinct church, effecting "as much as Councils ever effect, — that is, nothing at all, except, it may be, to increase the difficulty in which they intermeddled."¹ But these findings of a responsible tribunal could not be overlooked, and accordingly they were referred to a committee of the parish composed of its most respected members. At the head of the committee was John Quincy, then one of the most prominent men in the public affairs of the province, and others of its members bore names which had appeared on almost every page of the town records since the records began. The report of this committee was dated April 14, 1753, and, breathing a high order of the true Protestant spirit, it wholly justified the pastor. As to the immoralities charged on Mr. Briant, the committee declared that they had "never been proved in any one instance." Nevertheless the bitterness and harsh language engendered by this controversy may be inferred from the fact that, on the 22d of August following the report of the committee, "Ebenezer Adams was Suspended from the Communion of the Church for the false, abusive and scandalous stories that his unbridled Tongue had spread against the Pastor, and refusing to make a proper Confession of his manifest Wickedness;" but that Ebenezer Adams pursued the course he did from conviction rather than malevolence may be inferred from the fact that, twenty years later, in 1773, the church, in the

¹ Lunt, *Two Discourses*, 141.

days of Mr. Briant's successor, made choice of him for deacon, in the place of Deacon and Brigadier-General Palmer.¹ The probabilities are that Ebenezer Adams was merely a rigid, old-school Orthodox, whose theology, of no unusual kind, was not above seeking the aid of calumny.

On the 22d of the ensuing October a precinct meeting was held to take action on the pastor's request for dismissal. His health was failing. As was usual in the meetings, whether town or north precinct, of that period, John Quincy was made moderator, and it was presently voted that the pastor's request be granted, his parishioners apparently having considered that it was hopeless "to wait patiently some time longer to see if it may not please God in his good Providence to restore our reverend pastor to his former state of health." Mr. Briant did not survive his dismissal quite one year, dying at Hingham in the early autumn of 1754. At the time of his death he was but thirty-two, and, of all those who have served as pastors of his church, his remains and those of his eloquent successor a century later, William Parsons Lunt, alone do not moulder in the old North Precinct graveyard. Briant was buried in the neighboring town of Hingham in September, 1754, while, over a century later, Mr. Lunt, on the morning of the 21st of March, 1857, a tired wayfarer, was laid, decently, reverently, beneath the sands of the Syrian desert, as he journeyed towards the Holy Land. A little heap of stones alone marked his resting-place.

There is high authority for the statement that, in his religious views, Lemuel Briant was a man half a century in advance of his time. During the controversy of 1749-53, John Adams was a growing lad, for he entered Harvard in 1751. It was an open question with him whether he would prepare himself for divinity or the law, and in the minds of the college students of those days theological disputes had all the active interest which new scientific or philosophical theories have now. His own town of Braintree was the theatre in which the debate went on; one precinct of it was arrayed against another. Under these circumstances young Adams could not but have taken a lively interest in the discussion. More than

¹ *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Series II. vi.

sixty years then passed away, during forty of which the New England mind was wholly drawn off from problems of theology, and concentrated, first, on questions of civil rights, and on questions of government afterwards. Then, at last, during the earlier part of the present century, an established order of things was brought about politically, and once more religious issues come to the front. Growth had meanwhile been going on, quietly, slowly, giving no outward sign, until, all at once, it revealed itself in the Channing protest against Calvinism. New England Unitarianism assumed shape. Then Dr. Morse, of Charlestown, sent a pamphlet setting forth the tenets of the new sect to the ex-President, who was now verging on his eightieth year. In reply he wrote as follows, under date of March 4 and May 15, 1815:—

“I thank you for your favor of the 10th, and the pamphlet enclosed, entitled ‘American Unitarianism.’ I have turned over its leaves and find nothing that was not familiarly known to me. In the preface Unitarianism is represented as only thirty years old in New England. I can testify as a witness to its old age. Sixty-five years ago my own minister, the Rev. Lemuel Briant, Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, of the West Church in Boston, the Rev. Mr. Steele, of Hingham, the Rev. John Brown, of Cohasset, and perhaps equal to all, if not above all, the Rev. Mr. Gay, of Hingham, were Unitarians. . . .

“In short, sir, I have been a reader of theological, philosophical, political, and personal disputes for more than sixty years, and now look at them with little more interest than at the flying clouds of the day.”

Mr. Briant died in the autumn of 1754, and the last French War, that which resulted in the English conquest of Canada, had then already begun. At the time he died Washington was reconnoitring on the Ohio, and Lord Monkton was preparing for the removal of the Acadians; Braddock’s defeat took place in the following July. The Revolutionary struggle followed close on the French War. The rapid sequence of great events outside materially affected even the First Precinct church of Braintree, and a long period of doctrinal quiescence ensued, which amounted at last almost to torpidity. It was on the 22d of October, 1753, that Mr. Briant was dismissed, and just one year later, on the 8th of October, 1754, the parish extended a call to the Rev. Anthony Wibird.

Mr. Wibird, a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1747,

was at the time of this call in his twenty-eighth year. He at first declined, apparently on the ground that the salary voted would not suffice for his support. It was small, being but eighty pounds a year, with a further sum of one hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, "lawful money," for "a settlement." This it will be noticed was not so much as Mr. Fiske had received nearly a century before. Subsequently the parish modified its terms, offering a salary of one hundred pounds a year, with no sum at settlement, and this proposition Mr. Wibird accepted. Accordingly, on the 5th of February, 1755, he was ordained. His pastorate, the longest in the annals of the parish, covered forty-five years, outlasting the century. During it the colonies separated from the mother-country, and the North Precinct of Braintree became the town of Quincy. What with French and revolutionary wars and reigns of terror, the downfall of the old and the up-building of the new, the world in those days moved rapidly ; but amid all the turmoil without, — stamp-acts, tea-riots, Bunker Hill fights, Declarations of Independence, and elections of Presidents, — the Rev. Mr. Wibird seems to have pursued the even tenor of his way. His colleague during the closing years of his ministry wrote of him that "he was a learned man, though in his habits somewhat eccentric, and withal of great dignity, and beloved and respected by his people." He was, as his name implies, a genuine New Englander, also ; and traditions still linger among the grandchildren of his parishioners touching the dry, quaint humor with which he observed on men and things. He never married ; and, accordingly, in one of her letters to her husband Mrs. Adams refers to her pastor, not over respectfully, as "our inanimate old bachelor" whom she could not bear to hear on the Fast-day following the fight at Bunker's Hill. Neither was anything bearing Mr. Wibird's name ever put in type, though he was once chosen to deliver the annual election sermon. He was about seven years older than John Adams, who saw a good deal of him during the years while the former was picking up a practice at Braintree, and in 1759 the active-minded young lawyer wrote of the divine that his soul was lost in "dronish effeminacy," though he had "his mind stuffed with

remarks and stories of human virtues and vices, wisdom and folly, etc." On yet another occasion he observed upon Parson Wibird's popularity, — "He plays with babies and young children that begin to prattle, and talks with their mothers, asks them familiar, pleasant questions about their affection to their children; he has a familiar, careless way of conversing with people, men and women; he has wit and humor."

Before Mr. Wibird's pastorate closed he was, through bodily infirmity, disabled from preaching, so that on February 5, 1800, exactly four months before the pastor's death, the Rev. Peter Whitney was ordained as his colleague. Like all his predecessors in that pulpit, except Tompson and Flynt, Mr. Whitney was a Harvard graduate, belonging to the class of 1791, and at the time of his ordination he was thirty-two. His pastorate lasted through forty-three years, and during it the separation of church and state took place in New England, the parish ceasing in Quincy, as in the other towns of Massachusetts, to have any connection with the town. Intellectually, Mr. Whitney was in no way remarkable; a worthy, easy-going divine of liberal tendencies: and so, while Dr. Storrs, of the Middle Precinct, held his church and its people firmly to the strict faith of the fathers, the old North Precinct — the church of Wheelwright and Briant — was allowed to drift, as it was fit and proper that it should, quietly and easily in Channing's wake. The change to Unitarianism was almost unnoticed, and in 1827 Mr. Whitney was able to record that "for the last thirty years this society has been more united perhaps, than any other in our country. No 'root of bitterness' has in any measure sprung up to trouble them; none of that ill-will which sectarianism so often produces has been found among them; nor have any of those sources of division arisen which in so many of the towns of New England have cut the happiest societies asunder."

These words were written at the very time when the old epoch had come to a natural close, and the new one was about to begin. The silence of the West Quincy hills was now broken by the sharp ring of the sledge on the drill, and loud blasts told of quarries from which gangs of busy men were taking huge blocks of stone to be carried off on the newly-

devised railway, which, opened only the year before, was daily examined by curious visitors from far and near. Forces destined in a few years to revolutionize the town were newly but actively at work. Though the Mass had not yet been celebrated in Quincy, and, indeed, no new religious society had been organized there for more than a century, the church and the town were no longer one. The separation had taken place seven years before. Most significant of all, the old church edifice of 1732, in which three whole generations of townspeople had worshipped together as one civil and religious family, — this plain, wooden meeting-house was even then being removed to give place to that more pretentious temple of stone which was in a few years to be known only as the church of one, and not the most numerous, of the half-dozen religious societies into which the people of the town had divided.

CHAPTER III.

LAND TITLES AND THE TOWN'S COMMONS.

IN speaking of the town of Braintree, then newly incorporated, Captain Edward Johnson, in his "Wonder-working Providence," remarked, — "Some of Boston retain their farms from being of their Town, yet do they lye within their bounds, and how it comes to pass I know not." It will also be remembered that at the time of the incorporation two thousand acres had been "set apart at the Mount" for the use of Boston, "in the most convenient place unallotted." For several years thereafter Boston continued to make allotments in Braintree,¹ until in January, 1644, a tract of three thousand acres was granted to John Winthrop, Jr., and others for the encouragement of some iron-works then projected. Thus a quarter of the entire township, large as it was, had been either reserved to Boston, or set aside as common lands, or given away to form large private estates. It has already been remarked that the actual settlers in Braintree seem as a rule to have been poor persons who received small holdings. On these fell the burden of the town's charges.

Those charges, it is true, were in the earlier period practically limited to the support of the church; but a contribution of £110 a year for that purpose, which was the amount at first annually paid to Messrs. Tompson and Flynt, was a heavy burden; for, even though made in country pay, it represented over \$360 in modern money, and was, leaving out of the question the comparative scale of expenditure in vogue then and at the subsequent time, approximately the equivalent in purchasing power of \$2,000 two centuries later. After the year 1657 this annual payment was, it is true, reduced

¹ The last grant was made March 29, 1658; *Boston Record Com's Rep.* ii. 144.

to a sum which, in modern money, varied from \$200 to \$275 a year, but these amounts were the equivalent in purchasing power of from \$1,200 to \$1,600 now, and, at a time when the wages of a laborer averaged twenty-five cents a day, it is not easy to see how a small and poor community, consisting of some eighty families only, all working people, could annually raise among themselves even these amounts. Naturally, also, in the case of early Braintree, the exemption of the Boston allotments from their share of the charge was from the beginning a source of jealousy and contention. The arrangement of 1639, therefore, was one which could not be permanent. Accordingly, an order was passed by the Braintree freeholders, as early as 1641, that no house or land in the town should be sold to any one not an inhabitant until it had first been offered to "the men appointed to dispose of town affairs," and in case they did not see fit to purchase, it could then be sold "only to such as the townsmen shall approve on." Nor could any one not received as an inhabitant build within the town limits without permission. Similar restrictions are to be found in the early records of nearly all the original Massachusetts towns; but in the case of Braintree this practical inhibition of further non-resident land-ownership, and the strict limitation of the incoming of new settlers, had probably a fourfold object. It was, in the first place, an outgrowth of the Antinomian excitement and its alien law. Above all things, the peace of the church was not again to be disturbed; and to that end every element of civil and religious discord was to be excluded. Church and town were one; and it was thus reserved for the members of the church to say who might be inhabitants of the town. So important was this exclusive power centred in church-government and church-membership, that it is not too much to describe it as the corner-stone of the earliest Massachusetts polity. Its formal recognition on the first pages of the Braintree records was thus fit and proper. By it the Lord's people were securely hedged in against intruders.

Next, and second in importance only to religious considerations, came the fact that the legal inhabitancy of the town carried with it certain rights and privileges in the common lands, then supposed to be of value. Further on, these rights

and privileges will be more particularly referred to. Third came in the question of the support of the poor and the helpless. Under that system of English law and custom which the settlers had brought over with them, every one had a right to insist on being kept from starving and freezing. That right was established by legal residence. From the beginning, therefore, it has been matter of deep concern with all Massachusetts towns to prevent the poor and dependent from becoming legal inhabitants within their limits; and this is still the case. The order of 1641 was intended to provide against this liability. Fourth, and finally, the order referred to was intended to meet in a certain degree the vexatious question, peculiar to Braintree, of non-resident ownership. The people of the town wished to purchase among themselves all lands and tenements offered for sale, so that neither land nor tenement should in future be held by any one who did not actually live in Braintree and share in its town and parish burdens.

But the evil of absentee land-ownership could not be remedied in this way. Accordingly, in 1647 another attempt was made to correct it. Upon a commutation payment of £50 in five equal annual instalments, "to be made in merchantable corn, as wheat, rye, peas, and Indian, at fifty shillings in each of them," Boston agreed that all land owned by its inhabitants in Braintree should, when laid out and improved, be accounted as Braintree lands, and as such become liable to every common town charge. But this agreement, also, failed to settle the question. The unsurveyed and unimproved lands next became the bone of contention. Inhabitants of Boston, going back to the loose grants freely made in earlier times, claimed ownership. A vexatious and endless litigation seemed imminent. On a greatly reduced scale, it was the question which during that century and the next involved England and France and Spain in war upon war. A wilderness was in dispute, with a paper title set up against actual occupancy. Fortunately the parties to the conflict in this case were not in a position to declare war on each other, or even to come to blows; but in January, 1698, seventy freeholders of Braintree formally and in writing covenanted one

with another "to defend our ancient Rights, and oppose in a course of Law those and all those that shall by any means disturbe, molest, or indeavour to dispossesse" any of their number; and they promised to bear as a common burden all charges which might arise out of the lawsuits expected to ensue.

This determined front naturally brought about a compromise, and in the year 1700 a body of the Braintree freeholders agreed to purchase all the waste land within the town limits, a title to which was claimed by inhabitants of Boston, paying therefor £700. In order effectually to prevent a repetition of the non-resident experience, it was at the same time, and at a public meeting, further voted that no purchaser of these lands should make any conveyance of them to any outsiders, "thereby to let them have a foothold or interest in said purchase or any other way." The purchase-money was raised by voluntary subscription through the efforts of an association consisting of one hundred inhabitants of Braintree, and the Boston claims finally extinguished. It was noticeable, also, and characteristic of the time and of the people, that the committee of the town of Boston appointed to execute the deed for these lands, and to receive the purchase-money therefor, was further instructed to lay out "the said money in some real Estate for the use of the Public Latin School."

Thus ended a controversy the importance of which to Braintree cannot be exaggerated. It involved a vital question, — that of a fixed rent-charge to be forever paid by the actual occupant of land to a technical owner. English and Irish experience had sought to repeat itself on new soil. From the time of King James' grants to the Virginia companies in 1606 downwards, one grantee after another of large tracts of American wilderness had thought to secure forever some annual return from them, just as English adventurers and court favorites had secured similar returns from the grants of William the Conqueror, Henry VIII., and Elizabeth. It was proposed to transplant the feudal system to America, and the future increase, at least, in land value, — what is now in the language of the political economist known as the unearned increment, — was to be appropriated. A succession of organ-

ized efforts were made to bring this about, — efforts authorized by the King, while with them were associated the greatest names in England. For instance, it has already been seen how, on Sunday, the 29th of June, 1623, eleven men met together in a room at Greenwich, near London. King James was present with them, and a small map of New England was laid upon a table, with the whole coast, from the St. Croix to Buzzard's Bay, divided off by lines into forty parts not unequal in size. The eleven men then drew two lots each, the lots representing divisions on the map. They thus parcelled out New England. One duke, two marquises, six earls, a viscount, three barons, and nineteen knights were parties to the arrangement. King James drew the lot for Buckingham, who chanced not to be present. The region in which Braintree and Quincy lies fell to Lord Gorges. The Earl of Warwick drew Cape Ann.

This and many other similar attempts were made to introduce into New England the system which Strongbow had introduced into Ireland four centuries and a half before. That these attempts failed was, it may safely be asserted, the making of the New England people. The occupants of the soil became the owners of it. Paying no rent, what they would under another system have been forced to pay as rent remained with them; and it represented that slow accretion of substance which built up the community. The additional value which the laborer's toil gave to the land belonged to the resident toiler, and not to his absentee landlord.

This is not the place to discuss in detail the cause of the failure of these attempts, which was probably due to natural economic influences; for it clearly was not due to any prejudice against the system itself in the minds of the early settlers. The allotments at "the Mount" are conclusive evidence on this point. Landlordism depends on a monopoly of land; and it was, probably, the abundance of cheap lands combined with the want of accumulated capital, which made landlordism impossible in America. But, while this is true of the country as a whole, it is not true of Braintree. The net of the law was thrown over that community in 1637, when provision was first made for a church, and again in 1640,

when a town was incorporated. From that net the people of the town had to extricate themselves. The agreement of January 10, 1698, was accordingly their declaration of independence of landlordism. The contract of 26th January, 1700, was the recognition of that independence. The long struggle between the paper claimants of the soil, on the one side, and its actual occupants, on the other side, runs through sixty years of the town records. It was only an episode in the history of an insignificant New England village, and as such is beneath the notice of history. Yet it had great historical significance. In a natural way, all unconsciously to those composing it, a single member in a community of towns was asserting itself in the line of common development.

Meanwhile the freeholders had been called upon to pass through another experience in the same matter of title, which at the time seems to have occasioned no little alarm; but it reads now like a burlesque on those national claims then so freely asserted and bloodily argued. In August, 1665, certain inhabitants of Quincy, on behalf of the whole, took of the Indian descendants of Chickatabut a deed of the Braintree township, duly signed and sealed, with delivery "by turf and twig." It was one of those Indian titles so frequently met with in the early records of New England, and which grave historians have since not hesitated to defend and even to extol, — titles which, in point of fact, were a mockery of law, and in equity and good faith worthy of about the same consideration as a deed obtained by a swindler from a simpleton, or by a guardian from an infant ward; but, such as it was, the Wampatuck deed of 1665, conveying a title to Braintree township from the ignorant savage who never owned the soil to the actual occupants of it, was probably secured by the latter out of mere superabundance of caution, as a muniment of title in the controversy with Boston then going on.¹ Among the eight grantees was one Richard Thayer. By virtue of

¹ This deed, preserved apparently among the papers of the Quincy family, ultimately came into the possession of John Adams, and was produced by Charles Francis Adams at the time of the delivery of his address at the dedication of the Braintree Town-hall, June, 1857. It now hangs in the Braintree Town-house.

this Indian deed, Thayer, in 1682, asserted his title to the whole township, and actually petitioned the Privy Council to have the property put in his hands. In his petition he claimed to have long enjoyed quiet possession by purchase from the Indians, but more recently, "under pretence of an imaginary line," the Massachusetts colony had usurped jurisdiction and dispossessed him. The General Court had then, he asserted, disallowed Wampatuck's deed, and refused the grantee his appeal to the King. Accordingly, having now been driven from his property "to his bitter Ruin," Thayer made an appeal in person.

The Privy Council in due course referred the paper to the Committee of Trade and Plantations, and it was by them sent to Joseph Dudley and John Richards, the agents of the colony in London, to report thereon. All this was in the latter years of the reign of Charles II., — a period during which Massachusetts was not in favor at court; nor was it possible to know what secret, or even corrupt, influences might be at work behind a distant and all-powerful tribunal like the Privy Council. The freeholders of the town seem, accordingly, to have been greatly stirred up when tidings reached them of this new assault. An address to the King was at once prepared and "subscribed by an hundred and thirty-four hands out of this small town, consisting of ninety or a hundred families at the most." The remonstrance which accompanied this address seems to have been final; for, in January, 1683, Dudley and Richards filed their answer, in obedience to the order of the Council, and apparently it ended the Thayer claim. But the remonstrance of the town was a highly characteristic document. It was not only illustrative of the people and times, but is still entertaining reading. It was drawn up apparently by Colonel Edmund Quincy, that "true New England man," who died January 8, 1698. Thayer's history, character and belongings are there described with much particularity. It is declared untrue that he

"went into New England" in 1641; but it is agreed that "his very poor father, with eight poor children, of which this Richard was one, came two-and-forty years ago, in exceeding mean and low condition, and was suffered to sojourn, as a poor man and stranger, in a remote and obscure part

of the town untill he adventured to purchase only four acres of land, which at that time and in that place might be bought for a very small matter, yet more than the poor man was able or willing to pay. The grantor, yet living with us, now saith he is not paid for it to this day. . . . His father's shoppe, who was a cobbler, would now hardly containe him with his arms a Kembow. And of a mushrome hee's swolne in conceipt to a Coloss, or giant of State, and dreams of a Dukedome or petty province, since at first essay hee hath gotten a Maister-shippe. The vast tract of land he makes such a puther about is a mere Utopia, or, if more, a derne solitary desert, and his share therein can hardly reach the five hundredth part. . . . The body of the town are of one soule as to satisfaction with the present Government [that of Charles II.], and looke at themselves as basely traduced by Thayer's reports. Whose cards, had they been good, hee had the less need of cheating, fraud and falsehood to helpe him out." As to his complaint of the "utter ruin" brought on himself and family, the remonstrants asserted vigorously that he had brought it upon himself, "having expended that little estate he had in contention and litigation," so making himself "one of the forlorn hope among men of desperate fortunes, . . . and can find nothing for his living but by this way of lying and romancing about his vast dominions and territories of lands, plantations and towns to prosecute his fictitious claims, while his wife and family live in sordid poverty at home."

The town spoke in this way of Richard Thayer not without reason. The authorities had become acquainted with him and his ways during King Philip's war, when, in company with several others, he was impressed from Braintree. During a portion of the hostilities, there was a sort of advanced station, or picket-post, in Bridgewater, of which Thayer had charge, and he soon proved himself a timorous braggart. He evidently belonged to a class peculiar neither to that time nor to New England, — noisy, scheming men of great pretension and small performance. As a soldier, he kept the country in a state of continuous alarm, and was always scouting to no purpose. Nor did he forget at the end of the war to bring in what in those days was looked upon as an exorbitant bill for extra services, which the military committee of the town promptly disallowed.

Returning to the question of the town lands, the matter of title being disposed of, it remains to speak of the commons. In the original Braintree there were three of these, comprising some fifteen hundred acres in all, and known as the South and North Commons, and the ministerial lands. When it is

said that the settlers of Massachusetts were as a body common people of the purest English blood, much naturally follows. The English are a tenacious race, not easily adapting themselves to new conditions. They brought to New England, therefore, together with their language and families and household stuffs, a mass of customs and usages which dated back to the Saxon days of King Ceawlin and Ine, but were little applicable to the new surroundings. Of these usages and customs many yet remain in the more remote towns, strange relics of the almost forgotten communal system of early German life. Antiquarians from time to time come across them, and when they do so they are apt to expatiate, as if it were matter of surprise that the first settlers, in bringing with them their Saxon tongue, also brought their Saxon village ways.¹ Yet such was the fact. They not only brought those ways, but, after their natures, they were slow to see that in many respects such ways did not fit into their new life. In the matter of town commons, for instance, the original settlers came from a country in which all the land was occupied to a country in which, except in choice localities, land hardly repaid the cost of fencing. The cultivator certainly could not afford to pay rent. Consequently the Braintree commons, like those of most other towns, early proved a source of quarrel and vexation. The privilege of taking stone, timber and thatch off of those commons, as well as pasturing cows upon them, was long regarded as valuable. It was one of the advantages pertaining to legal inhabitancy. As early as 1646 a vote was passed, authorizing legal inhabitants to take timber off the commons for any use in the town, but imposing a penalty of five shillings a ton on any sold out of the town. For years votes of a similar character were from time to time recorded, especially in regard to stone for building material. Then, not satisfied with the commons they had within their own limits, with genuine Anglo-Saxon land-hunger, a number of the

¹ Doyle, *English in America; the Puritan Colonies*, i. 74; Adams, *Germanic Origin of New England Towns*, *Johns Hopkins University Studies*, i.; Andrews, *Theory of the Village Community*, *Am. Hist. Association Papers*, v. 47; Remarks of Messrs. Chamberlain and Goodell, *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, Second Series, v. 272, 320.

Braintree freeholders petitioned the General Court in 1666 for a grant of 6,000 acres elsewhere. The reason they assigned was that the town lands held in commonage were limited in quantity, only 2,000 acres, and "very poor and barren" as well as "much worn out," that the inhabitants were multiplying and "already much straightened," as a great part of the township was held by "Gentlemen and friends of other Towns" which the townspeople were "inforced by their wants to hire of them at dear rates;" but the petition was, in fact, an outbreak of the general and indiscriminate land fever which then and ever since has prevailed in America. In this case the General Court listened to the prayer addressed to it, and "on consideration of the reasons therein expressed" made a grant of 6,000 acres "in some place, limited to one place, not prejudicing any plantation or particular grant." Territorial questions, and the issues arising out of the disposition to be made of a public domain, were thus brought before the Braintree town meeting. The grant was in the first place to be definitely located; and, accordingly, the town in 1670 through its selectmen asked that it be done "in a place they have found lying between their township and Plymouth:" but this the General Court refused to authorize. Then, three years later, at "a publike training day" in March, 1673, Christopher Webb was empowered to "forthwith goe and find out a tractt of land, and by a Servier lay out" the grant, and make "a return of it in a plott under the serviers hand." He was to have a year in which to do the work of location, and to get it confirmed by the General Court, "and this being sufficiently and wel done the Towne does allow the sayd Web and partners 1500 acers for their paines and charge." Nothing was accomplished under this vote, not improbably owing to the imminence of those Indian troubles which culminated two years later in what is still known as "King Philip's War." The attention of the General Court was occupied by matters of greater moment than grants of land to towns. But in 1679, and referring to the final overthrow of the aborigines, Braintree again petitioned the Court that "since the *Lord* out of his rich grace had made them *lords* of the heathen land they might have an opportunity to have ratified the for-

mer grant;" and in answer to this quaint request leave was granted the petitioners "to lay out their sixe thousand acres in any vacant place" within the Massachusetts jurisdiction. The matter now seems to have lain dormant for thirty-four years, until in June, 1713, the Christopher Webb vote of 1673 was formally rescinded, and a new committee was appointed to find and lay out the 6,000 acres, who were to receive "for their so doing Thirty Pounds if the thing be effected, otherwise nothing." The grant was now, in 1715, confirmed, and the land assigned in that part of Worcester County since incorporated as New Braintree. In other words, it was much as it now is when a territory is organized out of which a new State is ultimately to be created. But it was at this point the real trouble began, for it became necessary to devise some definite policy for dealing with the public domain. Was that domain to be held? — or was it to be disposed of? — and, if disposed of, was it to be for the benefit of individuals, or of the community? — If for the benefit of individuals, to whom did it belong, and how was it to reach the beneficiaries? — If for the benefit of the community, how and to what public uses was it to be applied? — The Congressional discussions of the future were now anticipated in the wearisome town-meeting wrangles which, through long years, took place within the walls of the old stone meeting-house of Braintree.

Accordingly, in 1714 it was voted that the grant should be sold; and the year following it was voted it should not be sold. The question was then agitated as to who the land in question belonged to; and a committee appointed, in 1719, to consider the matter, in due time reported that, in the opinion of those composing the committee, the land "belonged to the Persons that were [at the time the grant was made, in 1667] Freeholders and to their Posterity." This conclusion the town refused to adopt; and then, after first voting neither to sell or lease the grant, it finally, in apparent despair of any other solution, voted "that the said Land should be sold, the produce thereof to be disposed for the use of the Town for ever;" but "against this vote Ephraim Thayer entered his dissent." This decision was reached in 1720; but it did not prove final, for the next year those who desired to get indi-

vidual advantage out of the grant rallied, and passed a vote at the April meeting "that all Persons that were (and now are) Inhabitants of this town, that paid charges in the year 1715, to the [cost of locating and] laying out of the said 6000 acres of land to this town, They, their Heirs or assigns, have a propriety in said Lands." And so the vexed question dragged along, — the action in the town meeting of one year being reversed in the town meeting of the next, — the grant remaining a useless and apparently a worthless bone of contention, until at last in 1727, — sixty years after the General Court acceded to the prayer of the original petitioners, — it was finally voted that, "for the more Peaceable settlement" of the matter, the land should be equally divided, as nearly as might be, between the two precincts, "to be henceforward managed, improved and further Divided or Disposed of, as shall be agreed on and ordered by each Precinct Respectively from time to time for ever hereafter."

The records do not show what became of the great 6,000 acre grant of 1666 after this action was taken; nor is the matter one of any considerable moment. It is said that a few of the inhabitants of Braintree moved thither and settled in various portions of it, and that the proceeds of some sales of land there made reached the precinct treasuries; certainly some years later, when the inhabitants of "Braintree Farms," as the locality was called, sought, with the full consent of the non-resident proprietors, to be incorporated as an independent town, among those of the non-resident proprietors were the familiar Braintree names of Quincy, Crosby, Faxon, Belcher, Rawson, Paine and Adams. Made a separate precinct of the town of Hardwick in 1751, it was not until 1776 that New Braintree was incorporated, one hundred and ten years after the original grant; but, neither after its incorporation nor while it remained a precinct, is there anything to indicate that the evils as respects non-resident land-ownership, which had marked the earlier days of the mother town, were experienced by the offshoot.

This was one phase — what might be termed the territorial phase — of the public domain question. The other phase

of the same question related to the communal lands within the township, — the so-called Braintree commons, which the inhabitants used “to pasture upon for the Summer time those cattle which they [were] necessitated to raise and keep.” These lands, it has already been said, included some 3,000 acres within the town limits, lying in two different parcels and known as the North and the South Commons. Each year and at almost every town meeting, the freeholders were called upon to take some action looking to what was called the improvement or to the defence of the town lands, and no less than 180 votes relating to this subject are found in the records. Almost endless provision of an unavailing sort was made to prevent waste, — votes looking to the preservation of the boulders scattered over the granite hills, or the trees which grew in the scanty soil which overlaid them. In 1662 and again in 1772 parts of the common lands were fenced in, and litigation ensued. Then, in 1682, a committee was instructed to lease a portion to Benjamin Tompson, the schoolmaster, and son of the first minister, for a term of twelve years. Then, in 1699, it was again voted that the town “would stand by the persons who have the town Lands leased to them, in defending them from Mr. Tompson, their late Schoolmaster, they paying rent of said Land to the Town Treasurer for the use of the present school.” Tompson also had given to him “a piece of land to put a house upon on the common.” The lands were then leased to others, and the rent applied to the support of the school. But this plan of improvement failed in its turn. The lessees complained bitterly of trespasses and encroachments, finally throwing their lease up. In their memorial they particularly referred to one open way which had been recently laid out through these lands; and they add that, “although we repeatedly attempted to fence against the same by a sufficient stone wall, yet we were as often prevented by certain unknown evil-minded persons, who, as fast as we built up the wall by day, did in the night-time throw the same down again.”

Under these circumstances both the lessees and the town were discouraged. However it might be in England, the remains of the communal land system, beyond the limits of a training-field and burying-ground, were not productive of sat-

isfactory results in Massachusetts. It was accordingly proposed that the commons should be sold ; and this question divided the town for years, just as it has since divided the Parliament of Great Britain and the Congress of the United States. The problem which Burke and Benton debated on a large scale was, on a smaller scale, and before they were born, discussed in the Braintree town meetings. "The Difficulties and Disputes Relating to said Commons" seem to have culminated about the year 1750 ; for they then occupied the attention of the town meetings almost to the exclusion of other business, and the meagre records still bear evidence to the heat with which the subject was wrangled over, for each article of the warrants relating to it is disposed of only after "considerable" or "great debate," and the question would be "voted and contested, Polled and determined." At last, in 1753, the issue was fairly raised whether the town would set a price on the commons with a view to their sale ; and, a little later in the same year, after refusing to appoint a committee "to consider what method would be best to Regulate the Towns Commons by Dividing, selling, or Letting," it was voted to divide them, and a committee of fifteen, at the head of which were John Quincy and Josiah Quincy, was appointed to report a method of division. A month later this committee made a model report to the adjourned meeting. It was in these words : — "At a meeting of the Committee appointed by the Town to Consider and Report, what may be the most proper method of Dividing the Towns commons, The subject being fully considered and Debated, upon the Question being put whether it was best for the Town to Divide the same by Poles or Estates, the Committee was equally divided in their opinion thereon. In the name of the Committee J. QUINCY." This report was presented on the 16th of April, and a number of freeholders present at the meeting recorded their dissent "against dividing the commons by Poles ;" but, at a subsequent adjourned meeting held a month later, "after considerable debate" the division by polls was voted, and a new committee of five, "they serving the Town Gratis," was appointed to consider "who may and ought to be interested" in the division decided upon, and "to produce

an exact list of all such persons." The name of Quincy did not appear among those composing this committee, which a month later made its report and submitted a list of those entitled to share in the division, both of which documents were "Lodged with the Clerk." Yet, though the course now recommended was approved and adopted, and "all votes that have heretofore passed Respecting the Division of the Town's commons [were] Ratified and confirmed," the commons still remained undivided. In so far as the public domain sufficed for so doing, every freeholder had voted himself a farm; but the farm remained in the common possession, and was not conveyed to the individual. Such a method of division might commend itself to the average voter, but it was not practicable.

Accordingly, the next year the question of leasing again presented itself, and was referred to a committee; and, at an adjourned meeting held on the 6th of March, 1755, a number of open ways were laid out through the commons. Then, on the 24th of the same month, a special town meeting was called to reconsider these votes "as they were passed when there was but a small number of the Inhabitants by reason of the extraordinary snow," and "the Question was put whether the Town concur with any of the votes passed at the adjournment voted and Polled, concurred, 83, non Concurred, 91." But, though nothing more seems to have been done to bring about a division in severalty among the inhabitants of the town, the contention still went on until in 1762 the lessees of the commons found themselves so annoyed and molested in the ways which have already been described, that they formally declined to fulfil any longer the conditions of their leases. The name of "Mr." John Adams now appears for the first time in the records; heretofore it had always been with the prefix of "Lieutenant" or "Deacon." Having graduated at Harvard in the class of 1755, John Adams was now twenty-seven and had been practising law in Braintree about four years, during which, though he had apparently held no office and his name does not appear in the records, he had doubtless taken a considerable interest in town affairs. As the action of the lessees of the commons involved a legal issue, the mat-

ter was referred to a special committee, at the head of which was "Mr. John Adams." It was his first appearance in public life,—the first of many issues involving questions of state policy with which he was destined to find himself confronted. Years afterwards he briefly told the story of what ensued:—

"In 1763 or 1764 the town voted to sell their common lands. This had been a subject of contention for many years. The south parish was zealous, and the middle parish much inclined to the sale; the north parish was against it. The lands in their common situation appeared to me of very little utility to the public or to individuals; under the care of proprietors where they should become private property, they would probably be better managed and more productive. My opinion was in favor of the sale. The town now adopted the measure, appointed Mr. Niles, Mr. Bass, and me to survey the lands, divide them into lots, to sell them by auction, and execute deeds of them in behalf of the town."

This was accordingly done, and so the strifes, contentions, litigations and ill feelings which the town's commons had through a century and a quarter engendered between neighbors, friends and freeholders were ended; nor that only, for at the same time a great element of corruption was removed from town politics, for jobbing out the commons could no longer be used in the interest of candidates at the annual elections. Perhaps the most singular circumstance connected with the subsequent fate of the North Common was that a large portion of it, including that region immemorially known as Mount Ararat, in which the leading Quincy stone-quarries have since been developed, was afterwards bought by John Adams himself. Towards the end of his life he conveyed this tract back to the town in endowment of an academy. It has always been locally known as "the common," and the rents received from it for pasturage and rights of quarry have again in this way been appropriated to school purposes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HIGHWAYS.

LIKE most primitive settlements which are not themselves seminal,—such as Boston, Salem and Plymouth,—Braintree grew up naturally at certain more favored or fertile points on the line of a main thoroughfare between considerable local centres lying beyond its own limits. In this case the thoroughfare connected the Massachusetts and the Plymouth colonies, and the line followed by it was dictated in advance by the lay of the land, the points of ferriage or fording, and the course of the brooks. The construction of a great coast road from Newbury, on the Merrimac, to Hingham—the northern and southern limits of the Massachusetts Bay Colony—had been ordered by special vote of the General Court in November, 1639, two months after the Braintree church was gathered. Those deputed to lay out the new road were empowered to do so wherever it might “bee most convenient, notwithstanding any man’s propriety, or any corne ground, so as it occasion not the puling downe of any man’s house or laying open any garden or orchard.” Its width was not specified, except in the common lands or where the soil was wet and miry; it was there to be six, eight and even ten rods wide. At first designed to connect all the outlying coast towns of the Massachusetts Bay with Boston, it naturally was almost immediately continued along the shore to Plymouth. South of Boston it doubtless followed almost exactly the old Indian trail, seeking the fords, avoiding morasses, clinging to the uplands, and skirting the rough, wooded heights. This trail in due course of time was succeeded by the blazed way, axe-marks on the bark of trees supplying for the settler those more subtle indications which had pointed out his path to the savage. The earliest Europeans, like Alderman of Bear Cove, in 1634,

made their journeys on foot, and groped their way from tree to tree. The blazed trail was shortly succeeded by the bridle-path, which was little more than the blazed trail made passable to horsemen, so that only at certain points was the rider forced to dismount and lead his steed over difficult ground. The highway was beginning to take shape. Naturally, these incipient roads were far from straight, and in following them many fences and gates had to be passed. They were, in fact, little more than a succession of farm lanes running through cleared and fenced lands, and open only through the commons. Gradually these farm lanes were fenced in, and the bars and gates removed, until at last the lanes were more or less straightened out, and made public ways.¹

Such being the general process, the date of the laying out of any particular street, or the fact that originally it passed the gate or house of Goodman This or Deacon That, is of interest only as affecting titles, or to those dwelling upon it. In history it is mere cumbersome detail. That only is of moment now which bears on the progress of early development; and the genesis of the Massachusetts town roads can best be studied in the history of one of them. The original main thoroughfare through Braintree, connecting it with Boston, is fairly typical.

In a direct line the centre of the North Precinct was but little more than seven miles from Boston stone; and the devious character of the colonial ways is well illustrated by the

¹ A very excellent example of this genesis and slow development of a Massachusetts thoroughfare can be traced through the Braintree records in the case of the main road from Quincy to Boston over the Neponset Bridge, so called. The bridge across the Neponset was built in 1803 by the Neponset Bridge Company. The town then granted to the corporation holding this charter all its "right and title to the old road, between Mr. Black's and the stone post at the corner leading to Squantum." This "old road" had first been laid out in February, 1715, as "a Town Driftway (not to ly open)" from "Col. Quincy's Gate next the Road," or the long railroad bridge at Bridge Street, through the fields to Squantum Street, or "the way leading to Milton." In 1731 "this way was voted, accepted, &c." It was first repaired at the town's charge in 1769, and was laid out as "an open way" in 1772. Not until 1803, eighty-eight years after it was first laid out, did it become the chief thoroughfare for travel of the town. See *Braintree Records*, 118, 132, 153, 163, 423, 436; Pattee, 68, 96.

fact that the great coast road of 1639 increased this seven miles to ten. It followed in some degree the line of the bay shore in order to avoid the difficult Blue Hill formation, and yet it was forced to make a long detour to get away from the creeks and marshes which everywhere indent the coast. But the Neponset River was the great obstacle to be overcome; and for more than twenty years that puny stream seems to have defied every colonial effort at reliable crossing. Indeed, the futile attempts to effect one afford perhaps as clear an insight as can be obtained into the process through which the road development of New England was gradually worked out.

The matter of a reliable public-way crossing of the Neponset first received the attention of the General Court in 1634, the year in which Boston had "enlargement at Mount Woolliston." Mr. Israel Stoughton was then granted liberty to build a mill, weir and bridge at the river's lower falls. Five months later, at the next session of the court, an exclusive mill privilege on the Neponset was granted to Stoughton, who, on the other hand, agreed to "make and keep in repair a sufficient horse-bridge over the said river." The building of this bridge was an important event in the history of the colony, — as important as was the building of the St. Louis bridge across the Missouri in the history of the nation more than two centuries later. Indeed, the earlier effort at construction taxed much the more severely of the two the resources of the community which attempted it. Father of a son more famous than himself, and whose name in connection with the quaint and venerable hall which perpetuates his memory is a household word among the graduates of Harvard College, Israel Stoughton was a man of enterprise and substance. In the summer of 1634 he built on the Neponset the mill at which was ground the first bushel of corn ever ground by water-power in New England. This prototype of all the busy water-wheels in New England stood at the foot of Milton Hill, on the Dorchester side of the stream, in the midst of a wilderness; for it was four miles from any settlement on the north, while to the southward Wessagusset was the nearest inhabited place. There was no road to it, and in 1634 the

bridge at Stoughton's mill was probably little more than a succession of logs thrown from rock to rock across the stream, affording passage to people on foot only. In the autumn of that year the blazed trail seems to have been converted into a bridle-path; for the town of Dorchester then ordered a road made to the mill, and voted the sum of five pounds with which to make it. This amounted to a little over one pound a mile for a road through a wilderness, and it was intended to make a trail passable for horses, so that those having corn to be ground could get access to the mill by land as well as water. Such was the beginning of the Plymouth road through Dorchester.

Mount Wollaston was now annexed to Boston, and a number of allotments made there. The need of a land route between the two places began to make itself felt. Accordingly, in 1635, John Holland, a wealthy and enterprising Dorchester man, was authorized to keep a ferry between what is now Commercial Point and a creek on the opposite shore, charging fourpence for the carriage of each passenger, or threepence each in case there was more than one passenger. There were not passengers enough to make the business of carrying them a paying one, and this ferry was soon discontinued. The next attempt was made at a point higher up the stream, and by Bray Wilkins, who then dwelt on the Neponset, but subsequently moved to Salem, where he lived into the next century, dying at the age of ninety-two.¹ Ten years before his death, Bray Wilkins, being then eighty-two, rode down to Boston, with his wife on the pillion behind him, to pass election week. During this visit he went out to Dorchester, having an experience there which led to his afterwards playing a wretched part in the hideous witchcraft mania of 1692. This was more than half a century later; and now, in 1638, at the age of twenty-eight, he was ambitious of being a ferryman. Accordingly, he got permission to set up a house of entertainment and to ply across the Neponset, between the

¹ 1702, Jan. 2. Cold. I at study. Bray Wilkins dyed, who was in his 92d year. He lived to a good old age, and saw his children's children, and their children, and "peace upon our little Israel." — Diary of Rev. Joseph Green, of Danvers.

landing at the head of what is now Granite Bridge, on the Dorchester side, and the tongue of upland which, under the name of "the ridge," makes out across the marshes to the river's bank on the opposite shore. This, from the rate of fare established for it, was known as the "penny ferry." It was intended for the conveyance of foot passengers; and, indeed, owing to the flats in the river's bed, could have been used only when the tide was partially up. Like its predecessor further down the stream, it soon proved a failure, and was discontinued.

After this time there was no ferry at all across the river, as no one could be induced to undertake the charge of one unless he was furnished with a house, land and boat at the public cost. Such a method of overcoming the difficulty was not in accordance with the usages of the time; and so the Court, in apparent despair, referred the matter to Mr. John Glover, who lived on the south side of the river, in what was then a part of Dorchester. From the position of his farm Glover stood much in need of the ferry, and accordingly he kept up an agitation of the matter; so now the Court empowered him to grant the ferry to any one who could be induced to take it for a term of seven years, "or else to take it himself, and his heirs, as his own inheritance forever."

Four years more passed away, and the problem of crossing the Neponset was still unsolved. Mr. Glover did nothing. Yet the difficulty was one sure in time to force its own solution, for the river had to be crossed by every one journeying over the great coast road. Under the order of 1639 any town guilty of a default in the construction of so much of this road as lay within its limits rendered itself liable to a fine of five pounds; and, in view of its long neglect to build a bridge, measures were taken to enforce this penalty against Dorchester. The town then petitioned the Court for a remission of the fine. This was allowed in May, 1652, but only on condition that the bridge should be constructed according to law, within three months, "and, if not, the said fine to take place according to the court order, the making of such bridges over such rivers being no more than is usual in the like case."

Dorchester was stimulated by this pressure to some action,

but it seems to have been very loth to go into bridge-building. Accordingly, the town bethought itself of the clause in the exclusive grant to Israel Stoughton, in 1634, one condition of which was that the grantee should "make and keep in repair a sufficient horse-bridge" over the river. Israel Stoughton himself was now dead, but his widow owned and worked the mill; so proceedings were begun against her. She then, in her turn, had recourse to the General Court, and petitioned to be discharged from her liability. Some investigation was had, as a result of which her request was granted in part; and, in view of the fact that near the mill there was a good fording-place with a gravel bottom, she was excused from building a horse-bridge on condition that she maintained a good foot-bridge, with a sufficient hand-rail. Satisfied with this concession, the widow Stoughton seems to have adopted a policy of masterly inactivity, and the next spring the attention of the Court was called to the fact that, so far from a new foot-bridge having been built, the old bridge during the winter had been wholly ruined. Then at last, in May, 1655, the matter was taken energetically in hand. It was time, also. Massachusetts now numbered a population of over twenty thousand, dwelling in more than a score of towns, while Plymouth had five thousand people in five towns; and a little river only seven miles from Boston, on the main road between the two colonies, was still unbridged, and in times of freshet must for days together have been impassable. The construction of a cart-bridge "neere Mrs. Stoughton's mill" was now, therefore, pronounced both a necessity and a county matter, and ordered to be undertaken at once; and a committee of six, among whom was Deacon Samuel Bass, of Braintree, was appointed, with full powers to locate the structure and to contract for its building, the cost of it to be duly apportioned among the several towns. The committee seem to have done their work so effectually that nothing more was heard of a bridge across the Neponset. Indeed, for a whole century and a half the travel between Boston and the south shore followed the old Plymouth road across Roxbury Neck through Dorchester, and over Milton Hill by the bridge at Stoughton's mill.

The first attempt to fix the line of the coast road through Braintree was in 1641; but not until 1648 was the final location made. Starting from the Milton line and running at the base of the hills, crossing brooks at the points where uplands were nearest each other, the coast thoroughfare divided, in the way already described, at the stone meeting-house, just beyond the bridge over the little brook known as the Town River; coming together just south of the meeting-house, the two forks became one road, which again took the best line, or line of least resistance rather, to the foot of the next range of upland, always avoiding the swamps. Then, crossing a spur of the granite hills by a sharp ascent and decline, it approached the Monaticquot, which, like the Neponset, proved an obstacle not easily overcome. As early as 1635 a ferry had been established across the Monaticquot between Mount Wollaston and Wessagusset, the toll being one penny for each person and threepence for each horse. The ferryman was one Thomas Applegate, of whom not much is known, except that he was married to a wife, Elizabeth, who would seem to have been an unamiable woman, inasmuch as in 1636, "for swearing, railing, and reviling," she was sentenced by the magistrates to stand with her tongue in a cleft-stick. Applegate did not long have charge of the ferry, for, in March, 1636, six months only after he was licensed, Henry Kingman, of Weymouth, was put in his place. A year later Kingman was authorized to keep a tavern in connection with his ferry, the toll on which was in March, 1638, raised to twopence a person. Meanwhile Applegate would seem to have remained in Kingman's employ, for this year in crossing the ferry he upset a canoe of which he had charge, and into which he had crowded nine persons, three of whom were drowned. For this misadventure he was summoned before the General Court, and Richard Wright, a prominent personage at "the Mount," was commissioned "to stave that canoe, out of which those persons were drowned." The matter ended with the appearance of Applegate and five others before the March General Court of 1639, which discharged them with an admonition not in "future to venture too many in any boat." But in consequence of this mishap the use of canoes at ferries was interdicted.

At its September session the General Court of 1639 changed the location of the Kingman ferry, and at the same time reduced the toll to a penny. Two months later the act providing for the construction of the coast road was passed, and, as the road was laid out in 1641, the ferry undoubtedly was a link in it. Subsequently John Winthrop, Jr., established his iron-works in that neighborhood, and a stone bridge was in 1644 built across the little river, ten years before one was built at the Milton Falls.

The section of the coast road within the limits of Braintree was about five miles in length, the church being not far from midway. It was the backbone upon which the growing settlement formed itself. At first it had but three lateral branches,—two to points upon the shore, Squantum and Hough's Neck, and one to what subsequently became the Second Precinct of the town. Wright's mill, upon the town brook, stood a short distance from it, and with this the way from Hough's Neck connected, crossing the coast road. From this simple beginning the system of modern town-ways gradually developed, the lane and farm-way regularly, at the proper time, becoming the village road and town street, fierce contests sometimes arising over questions of prescriptive right. But from 1641 to 1803 the old coast road remained the single thoroughfare from Braintree, and Quincy, to Boston. Then, at last, the needs of an increasing community began to make themselves felt, and a bridge across the Neponset nearer its mouth was projected. Chartered in 1802 and located in 1803, the turnpike road of which this bridge was a part followed nearly a straight line from the point where it crossed the Neponset to the centre of the town. The way in which it was laid out and built—disregarding the lay of the land, crossing the marshes, cutting through hills, and filling the bog-holes—was in strong contrast with the method pursued a century and a half before. It even dimly foreshadowed the coming railroad era. Gates and bars and crooked farm-ways disappeared before the "pike," and the colonial lines of travel underwent a change which only prepared the way for the greater change brought about by the railroad only twoscore years later.

During Braintree's first century it is very questionable whether the roads were kept in any state of systematic repair at all. That they were very bad, and at the season of the year when the frost comes out of the ground well-nigh impassable, may safely be inferred. There was no tax imposed for constructing or keeping them in order, and such work as was done upon them was done in kind. At certain seasons of the year every one was called upon to labor on the highways, bringing with him his horse and his oxen, if he had them, his cart and his tools. The principles of road construction were not understood, and the labor and time expended were largely thrown away.

As early as 1730 "the affair of mending or repairing the Highways" in the usual method, by surveyors, or by a town rate, had been the occasion of "some considerable Debate." In 1734 the matter was again agitated, and now "the vote was thought by some not to be clear, after which it was decided by the Poll in the negative." In 1756, "large Debate being had thereon," the town decided in favor of a rate; but, a few days later, this action was promptly reconsidered, and "the usual method of surveyors" substituted therefor. It may be inferred that the condition of the ways was now very bad, for, in 1761, when the question of repairing them by special tax or as theretofore came up, "after considerable Debate thereon Coll. Josiah Quincy made a Present of Fifty Dollars to the Town to be expended in mending the ways;" whereupon the town at once voted its thanks to "the Collo. for his noble and Generous Grant." Fifty dollars represented the labor for one month of two men and one horse and cart at the rate of wages then paid. As will presently appear, John Adams was chosen Surveyor of Highways at the town meeting in which Colonel Quincy made his offer, and very possibly it was Colonel Quincy's gift of \$50 that the young surveyor used in ploughing, ditching, blowing rocks and building bridges during the ensuing season; for, as no tax was levied, it is not apparent from what source other than this the money so spent could have been derived.

In any event the change of system as respects the highways, which had then been more than thirty years under dis-

cussion, took place about the year 1764, and John Adams was instrumental in bringing it about. Two years before he had, in the way which has already been described, settled the long vexed question of the town's commons, and now he turned his attention to the roads. He long afterwards recounted his experience in the matter. In March, 1761,¹ being then a young lawyer in Braintree, he had heard himself suddenly nominated in town meeting as surveyor of highways. At first he was very indignant, remarking that "they might as well have chosen any boy in school;" but, after thinking the matter over, he concluded that it was best for him to accept the situation quietly, and at least give the town an energetic administration of the office.

"Accordingly, I went to ploughing and ditching and blowing rocks upon Penn's Hill, and building an entire new bridge of stone below Dr. Miller's and above Mr. Wibird's. The best workmen in town were employed in laying the foundation and placing the bridge, but the next spring brought down a flood that threw my bridge all into ruins. The materials remained, and were afterwards relaid in a more durable manner; and the blame fell upon the workmen, not upon me, for all agreed that I had executed my office with impartiality, diligence, and spirit."

Yet this not unusual outcome of amateur, though official, zeal seems to have set the Braintree road surveyor reflecting, for he goes on to say:—

"There had been a controversy in town for many years concerning the mode of repairing the roads. A party had long struggled to obtain a vote that the highways should be repaired by a tax, but never had been able to carry their point. The roads were very bad and much neglected, and I thought a tax a more equitable method and more likely to be effectual, and, therefore, joined this party in a public speech, carried a vote by a large majority, and was appointed to prepare a by-law, to be enacted at the next meeting. Upon inquiry I found that Roxbury and, after them, Weymouth had adopted this course. I procured a copy of their law, and prepared a plan for Braintree, as nearly as possible conformable to their model, reported it to the town, and it was adopted by a great majority. Under this law the roads have been repaired to this day, and the effects of it are visible to every eye."

¹ This is apparently a mistake, as the name of John Adams does not appear among those of the sixteen Surveyors of Highways for the year 1761 (*Records*, 377), though that of Dr. Savil, who John Adams says caused him to be nominated for the position (*infra*, 127) does appear among them. Possibly, in order to avoid being called upon to serve as constable, he acted as Surveyor of Highways in place of Dr. Savil.

The closing words of this extract are perhaps the most suggestive portion of it. Some idea may be formed of what the condition of the roads must have been before 1760, when their condition prior to the year 1820 is confidently spoken of as a vast and indisputable improvement.

But during the whole colonial period down even to the year 1830, the use the roads were put to in a New England country town was comparatively light. There was then no internal commerce worthy of the name, and the pleasure travel over the roads amounted to nothing. Journeys were made chiefly on horseback. In the winter-time, when the ground was hard with frost or covered with snow, the clumsy carts and sleds, drawn mainly by oxen, were kept busy bringing loads of cordwood down from the wood-lots, or carrying corn, potatoes and other farm produce to market in Boston. Manure was hauled merely from the barn-yard to the neighboring field; lumber and material were carted only when some dwelling or out-building had to be raised. The teaming of stone from the granite quarries did not begin until after 1825, and the stage-coach period was wholly of the present century. The first regular line of these coaches run from Boston was that to Providence in 1767, making part of the inside, or land and water route to New York; and the Massachusetts south-shore towns — Weymouth, Hingham, Scituate and Plymouth — had a packet or, later, a steamboat service until after the railroad was opened in 1846. As late as 1823 the entire stage-coach travel through Quincy was limited to some three trips a week to and from Plymouth and the intermediate towns. Strange as it now seems it was more than one hundred and seventy years after the settlement before even a baggage wagon, adapted also to the carriage of passengers, was run between Boston and Quincy, so trifling was the intercourse and traffic between the two places. Such a conveyance was at last, about the year 1804, felt to be needed, and Colonel James Thayer, who also kept the principal tavern in the town, ventured on the experiment. This carrier's wagon seems to have answered all existing needs for nearly a score of years more, and it was not until 1823 that Simon Gillett, purchasing the route of Thayer, shortly after put

upon it a regular stage passenger-coach, the John Hancock by name. This was an epochal event, and the John Hancock made four trips a week, carrying passengers inside and out. It left Quincy betimes in the morning so as to reach Barnard's, in Elm Street, Boston, at nine o'clock, from which place it started at four P. M. on its return trip. It was years later that daily trips were made; and, indeed, it was not until 1840, two full centuries after the incorporation of the original town, that the stage-coach movement began to tax the capacity of the highways.

During the first two centuries of the settlement, therefore, the country roads in Braintree and Quincy, however poorly made or kept in repair, were quite equal to the light work exacted of them. Of what that work was in the earlier and colonial days we get glimpses here and there in such records as that of Tutor Flynt's journey to Portsmouth in 1755, and John Adams' drive with his wife to Salem in 1766 to visit their "dear brother Cranch." There being then no stages at all in the colony, "a single horse and chair without a top was the usual mode of conveyance. A covered chair, called a calash, was very seldom used." In the case of Tutor Flynt, he and his companion, leaving Cambridge after breakfast, "oated" and had "a nip of milk punch" at Lynn, and then towards sunset "reached the dwelling of the Rev. Mr. Jewett, of Rawley, and Mr. Flynt acquainted him he meant to tarry there that night." They reached Portsmouth the following evening. John Adams, some ten years later, leaving Braintree in the morning, dined in Boston and passed the night at Medford, getting to Salem at noon the following day. The streets of Salem he found "broad and straight and pretty clean." The houses he thought the most elegant and grand he had seen in "any of the interior towns." A few years later, while riding the circuit, he described how he

"Overtook Judge Cushing in his old curricule and two lean horses, and Dick, his negro, at his right hand, driving the curricule. This is the way of travelling in 1771, — a judge of the circuits, a judge of the superior court, a judge of the King's bench, common pleas, and exchequer for the Province, travels with a pair of wretched old jades of horses in a wretched old dung-cart of a curricule, and a negro on the same seat with him driving."

An eye-witness gives a not dissimilar description of Dr. Chauncey, pastor of the First Church in Boston, as he drove about the town making his parochial visits at a period about fifteen years later. "In a heavy, yellow-bodied chaise, with long shafts, a black boy perched on the horse's tail, the old divine was seated, in his dignified clerical costume, with three-cornered hat, gold cane and laced wrists, bowing gracefully to citizens as he passed. His grinning young driver in the meanwhile exchanged his compliments with young acquaintances of his own color by touching them up with his long whip from his safe perch."

This was after the Revolution, but the simple ways of the fathers were still in vogue. It has already been mentioned that when Bray Wilkins, in 1692, at the age of eighty-two, came from Salem to Boston to pass election week, his wife, scarcely younger than himself, rode on the pillion behind him : but this method of conveyance was not peculiar to those of Bray Wilkins' condition in life. A few years later, in November, 1700, the widow of Colonel Edmund Quincy died. Judge Sewall went out to Braintree to her funeral from the old Quincy house, and he describes how, "because of the Porridge of snow, the Bearers rid to the Grave, alighting a little before they came there. Mourners, Cous. Edward and his Sister rid first ; then Mrs. Anna Quincy, widow, behind Mr. Allen ; and Cousin Ruth Hunt behind her Husband." A few years later yet, in 1712, Judge Sewall also describes a journey he made from Plymouth, where he had been holding court, to Boston. It was early in March :—

"Rained hard quickly after setting out ; went by Mattakeese Meeting-house, and forded over the North River. My Horse stumbled in the considerable body of water, but I made a shift, by God's Help, to set him, and he recovered and carried me out. Rained very hard, that went into a Barn awhile. Baited at Bairsto's. Dined at Cushing's. Dried my coat and hat at both places. By that time got to Braintry, the day and I were in a manner spent, and I turned in to Cousin Quinsey. . . . Lodged in the chamber next the Brooke."

CHAPTER V.

DWELLINGS AND MODES OF LIFE.

WHEN Judge Sewall thus turned in at its gate on that rainy March day, the Quincy house had already been standing for twenty-seven years. It still remains, a noticeable specimen of the best domestic architecture of colonial times. Its comparatively broad hall in the centre of the house, the easy, winding staircase with carved balustrade, the low-studded, but fairly large rooms opening to the south and west, the broken line of the floors and ceilings which tell the story of increased size, the little ship-like lockers and other like attempts to economize space while space is everywhere wasted, — all these things bespeak the dwelling-place of gentry. Time has only hardened into something very like iron the solid timbers of hewn oak still bearing upon them the marks of the axe; and one room yet has on its walls the quaint Chinese paper which tradition says was hung there in 1775 in honor of Dorothy Quincy's approaching marriage to Hancock.

Nor in the last century was the Edmund Quincy house the only specimen of this order of dwelling in Braintree North Precinct. Colonel John Quincy occupied another such house at Mount Wollaston, which he had built in 1716, and which stood there, though reduced to baser uses, until the year 1852. Here during his long public life he often entertained parties of ladies and gentlemen who came across the bay to visit him from Boston, and there are traditions of strawberry parties held on the Half-Moon Island before yet the upland top of that now submerged gravel ridge had been wholly washed away. The house of Leonard Vassall, built by him in 1731 and later owned by his son-in-law, was bought by John Adams in 1787. Another of these gentry residences, it was the summer resort of a West India planter and still contains one room panelled from floor to ceiling in solid St. Domingo

mahogany. Originally a small dwelling, constructed on a plan not unusual in the tropics, with kitchen and all domestic arrangements behind the house and in a separate building, in itself it contained only parlors and sleeping-rooms; but gradually it was added to, until the original house is now lost in the wide front and deep gabled wings of the later structure. In this house John Adams died; and in the same room in it was celebrated his own golden wedding in 1814; and later, in 1847, the golden wedding of his son, John Quincy Adams; and again in 1879 that of his grandson, Charles Francis Adams. It is not often that the marriage life extends through a period of fifty years; but that it should in this case have extended through that period in three successive generations of one family, and that the event should in each case have been commemorated in the same room, under the same roof-tree, is something which probably has not occurred elsewhere in America.

These houses and houses like these were the homes in Braintree of the landed gentry, during the long time in which there was in the community little property other than land. They were the manor houses of the period. Close to them stood the stable, the barn, the corn and wood and cart sheds, the cider-mill, and all the other buildings belonging to the farm, which lay behind and round about them. Nor were those farms merely the costly luxury of gentleman-farmers. On the contrary, the owner of the house drew from the farm his chief support. He lived upon its produce, for the more prolific soil of the West had not then beggared New England agriculture. From wood-lot to orchard the fruits of each acre were carefully gathered, and what was not sold was used in rude abundance at home. Yet the primitive simplicity of those early homes can now hardly be realized. They had none of the modern appliances of luxury, and scarcely those now accounted essential to proper cleanliness or even decency. As dwelling-places during the less inclement seasons of the year, these houses were well enough, though existence within them was simple and monotonous to the last degree; but in winter there was little comfort to be had. John Adams towards the end of his life used to wish that he could go to sleep

in the autumn like a dormouse, and not wake until spring. The cold of the sitting-rooms was tempered by huge wood fires, which roasted one half the person while the other half was exposed to chilling drafts. The women sat at table in shawls, and the men in overcoats. Writing on the "Lord's Day, January 15th, 1716," Judge Sewall notes, "An Extraordinary Cold Storm of Wind and Snow. . . . Bread was frozen at the Lord's Table: . . . Though twas so Cold, yet John Tuckerman was baptized. At six o'clock my ink freezes so that I can hardly write by a good fire in my Wive's Chamber. Yet was very Comfortable at Meeting." And to the same effect four years later, Cotton Mather says, "'Tis dreadful cold, my ink glass in my standish is froze and splitt in my very stove. My ink in my pen suffers a congelation." Such was the indoor temperature at times in rooms artificially heated, while as for the unventilated bedrooms, water was not left in them over-night for the simple reason that in the morning it would as a matter of course be found frozen solid; and entries, which could not be heated, had the temperature of ice-houses.

Such were what might be called the mansions of the colonial gentry, and such in Braintree they continued to be until long after 1830. The gradual introduction of coal and new appliances for heating then revolutionized modes of life. The dwellings of the farmers were of another class, excellent specimens of which still remain in Quincy in the old Adams houses at Penns-hill, and in the so-called Hardwick house, once the home of Parsons Fiske and Marsh. It was the simplest form of domestic architecture. A huge stack of brick chimney was the central idea, as well as fact, in it, and about this the house was built. It was one room only in depth, and two stories in height. The front door opened on a narrow space, with rooms on either side, while directly opposite the door, and some four or five feet away, were the crooked stairs, supported on the chimney. Behind this outer shell was a lean-to, or Leanter as it was pronounced and is sometimes found spelled, the sloping roof of which, beginning at the rear eaves of the house, descended to within a few feet of the ground. In this were the kitchen and wash-room; and here, on all ordinary occasions, the family took their meals and the household

work was done. Of the front rooms, one was the ordinary sitting-room and the other the best parlor, which, formal, unventilated and uncomfortable, was entered only upon the Sabbath or great occasions, such as a funeral or a wedding or a christening. About these houses, which stood as a rule facing towards the south and as near as might be to the road, though rarely square with it, were the out-houses, sheds and barns necessary for carrying on farm or household work.

The wearing apparel and household furniture, as revealed through the Braintree inventories, speak also of a modest and almost Spartan simplicity. There seem to have been a few beds, — possibly one of feathers, but generally of wool or of corn-husks, — some bolsters, blankets and coverlids; but, except in the cases of the more wealthy, there is no mention of bed linen. Col. Edmund Quincy's two carpets were appraised at one pound. There was a table, and possibly two; a few chairs, perhaps half a dozen, and, in the case of the rich, a scattering of cushions and covers to chairs, but stools were chiefly in use. Knives and forks are not mentioned until a comparatively recent time, but pewter and earthenware is generally valued at from a few shillings to as many pounds. The kitchen utensils seem to have consisted of a brass and iron pot or two, and some pans. In the house there would be a Bible, and possibly a few other books; an old musket and sword; a looking-glass now and then. The dress was of homespun, and worn and reworn until there was nothing left of it. In the division of personal effects, "Benjamin Had a pair of Shoes," and "David Had a Beaver Hat," while "I Had one wosted Cap and a pair of old Shoues." A hat would thus descend from father to son, and for fifty years make its regular appearance at meeting. The wearing apparel of a whole family would be stored away for generations, fashions never changing; and accordingly it is a noticeable fact that wearing apparel constitutes the first and generally one of the largest items of the inventories.

The food and drink in use in Braintree during the first century or two of town life were as simple as the furniture. Indian corn-meal was the great standby; and even as late as the earlier years of the present century flour was bought by

the pound, and used only in the houses of the gentry. As bread made wholly of meal soon became dry, rye was mixed with it; and Governor Hutchinson told George III. in the interview which took place between them immediately after the arrival of the former in London, in July, 1774, that, from long use, the people of Massachusetts had at that time learned to prefer the coarse bread made of rye and Indian-corn meal mixed to flour or wheaten bread, "and some of our country people prefer a bushel of Rye to a bushel of Wheat, if the price should be the same."¹ Fresh meat was rarely seen, but the well-to-do in the autumn of each year were in the custom of salting down a hog or a quarter of beef, bits of which later on were boiled in the Indian porridge. During a period of fourteen years, including the last years of the seventeenth century and the earliest years of the eighteenth, a man named John Marshall, who then lived in Braintree, kept a diary, in which he jotted down homely items which at the time were to him of interest. This diary has been preserved, and the material portions of it published.² In it Marshall notes that in January, 1704, a hog weighing two hundred and sixty pounds cost him fifty shillings, or about \$8.33, and a quarter of beef, seventy-four pounds, cost him twelve shillings, or \$2; and he at the same time mentions that provisions were then "more plenty and cheap than is frequently known, beef for six farthings per pound, pork at twopence the most, the best two and a half pence, Indian [meal] two shillings per bushel, mault barley at two shillings." Naturally the constant use of salted meat created thirst; and this thirst, the necessary consequence of what it is the custom to call a simple mode of life, led to that intemperance which was the bane of New England. The use of tea and coffee as beverages was not general until about the middle of the last century, and prior to that time the people drank water, milk, beer, cider and rum. The excessive use of the last, and its demoralizing consequences, it will be necessary to speak of presently and at length. Meanwhile it will be noticed that Marshall in his

¹ Hutchinson's *Diary*, i. 171.

² A portion of it is in the appendix to Lunt's *Two Discourses*, 108-11, and another portion in *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc. Series II.* i. 148-64.

short price-list mentions "mault barley" as the staple next in importance to corn-meal. A brewery was one of the earliest Braintree institutions, second only to the mill. The first was established by Henry Adams, the town clerk, shortly after 1640, and was afterwards carried on by his son. Later, cider seems to have supplanted beer as the every-day and all-day beverage, and the quantity of it drunk by all classes down to a late period in this century was almost incredible. In the cellars of the more well-to-do houses a barrel of cider was always on tap, and pitchers of it were brought up at every meal, and in the morning and evening. To the end of his life a large tankard of hard cider was John Adams' morning draught before breakfast; and in sending directions from Philadelphia to her agent at Quincy, in 1799, Mrs. Adams takes care to mention that "the President hopes you will not omit to have eight or nine barrels of good late-made cider put up in the cellar for his own particular use."

There were no shops, in the modern sense of the word, in Braintree or in Quincy prior to 1830. At the village store the more usual and necessary dry and West India goods, as the signs read, from a paper of pins to a glass of New England rum, could be obtained. For everything else people had to go to Boston, which they did on foot, on horseback, in chairs or carts, and by water. Marshall in his diary speaks of going to Boston as no unusual occurrence. In October, 1705, his father died; in September, 1708, he lost an infant son; and in October, 1710, his mother. In each case he speaks of going to Boston the next day "to get things for the funeral." He was himself a mason and plasterer, but like most men of his time he seems to have turned his hand to anything by which he could earn a few shillings, for he was a farmer, a carpenter, a tithingman, a coroner, and town constable; and, acting probably in the latter capacity, he notes that on April 3, 1700, he "went to Boston with a Roge that ran away from me." The boot-maker, the cobbler, the mason and the carpenter were all recognized mechanics, and earned a living by their trades. The usual wages of skilled labor were from sixty-five cents to a dollar a day, those of ordinary, unskilled labor two shillings or thirty-three cents, and, fluc-

tuations of currency apart, these wages seem to have generally ruled until the end of the seventeenth century. The busiest man in the community was the blacksmith, for not only were all the horses and oxen shod at his forge, but he was the general wheelwright, and maker and repairer of farm tools. Everything made of iron soon or late passed through his hands, and his shop, standing on the main street, was a central point in the life and movement of the town. For the rest, the peddler and the fishman were the chief purveyors both of news and of merchandise, and their horns were regularly heard on Braintree roads during the first two centuries of town life.

CHAPTER VI.

POPULATION AND WEALTH.

IT has already been stated that, at the time the original Braintree church was gathered, the town numbered about eighty families, representing a population of not far from five hundred souls, living mainly within the limits of what afterwards became the North Precinct. In 1640, the English emigration to New England had already ceased, and for many years thereafter the coming of new families into Braintree was systematically discouraged. In 1682 the population of the town was limited to "about ninety or a hundred families at the most." In 1707 it was stated that there were seventy-two families in the North Precinct, and seventy-one in the rest of the town, though in 1713, six years later, the Rev. Thomas Eager asserted that Braintree "consists of one hundred and twenty families;" but, not impossibly, he then referred to the North Precinct only. Assuming that there were 143 families in the entire town in 1707 (and the enumeration then made was undoubtedly thorough), during the next half century the population would seem to have increased less than threefold, for, in the census of 1765, Braintree was returned as containing 357 families. Franklin, as the result of careful computations, reached the conclusion that the inhabitants of America, from natural increase, doubled their numbers during this period in twenty-five years, and Governor Hutchinson, than whom no one was better qualified to form an opinion on such a point, thought the estimate not excessive; though, he said, the increase was greater in the southern than in the northern colonies.¹ The New England family was unquestionably larger then than now, and, according to the census of 1765, it averaged in Braintree almost exactly seven persons. If the same average held good for the earlier pe-

¹ Hutchinson, *Diary*, i. 170.

riod, the population of Braintree did not fall much short of 700 in 1683, and had increased to 1,000 in 1707. During the next fifty-eight years it grew to 2,433, a rate of increase only half of that computed as natural by Franklin. Yet the figures do not indicate anything larger, and the data are fairly reliable. The conclusion would seem to be that, judging by the experience of Braintree, the population of New England, with almost no immigration, increased during the century which preceded the revolutionary troubles at the rate of about fifty per cent. in each twenty-five years.

Between 1765 and 1790, — twenty-five years, — the increase was abnormally small, about fourteen per cent.; but during the next fifty years it was 220 per cent., for the period of rapid modern growth had then set in. Yet, in the one hundred and twenty years which elapsed between the incorporation of the town and the year 1830, the number of persons living within the limits of the original North Precinct of Braintree increased only fivefold; while, during the next sixty years it was destined to multiply sevenfold. Making allowance for a positive decrease of population during the period of revolutionary troubles, the population of the North Precinct apparently increased in the eighteenth century from 500, in 1707, to 1,081, in 1800, or about twofold; during the next ninety years it increased from 1081 to 16,711, or over fifteenfold. In other words, in the matter of population and in the case of Braintree, the development of the eighteenth century was to the nineteenth, positively as 580 is to 15,630, and relatively as two is to fifteen.

There are few data upon which to base an estimate of the accumulated wealth of any of the New England towns before the beginning of the present century; or, in fact, during it. It is not difficult to take the figures of the census and, dividing the aggregate of returned wealth by the total of the population enumerated, to then assert that the accumulated wealth of a community amounts to so many hundred dollars per head; but the result is merely one more statistical falsehood. The valuations used in this case were made for purposes of taxation only, and, as is perfectly well known, a sworn probate appraisal would show very different results. Such is the case

now, and it was much more so in the last century when the appraisals were merely nominal. For instance when, in 1792, Quincy was set off from Braintree and became an independent town, the whole amount of real estate in it was appraised by the assessors at £12 9s. 4d., and the personal property of the inhabitants at £3 7s. 8d.,¹ or a total of \$52.77 as the assessed valuation of a town returning one hundred and ninety-two poll-tax payers with a population of not less than 2,000 souls. The assessors of those days were citizens of the town, and as such not devoid of worldly wisdom. They probably realized the fact that the newly incorporated Quincy would in due time be called upon to pay a state and a county tax, as well as to provide for its own needs; and, as those taxes were apportioned on assessors' returns, they saw no advantage likely to result from a valuation unduly inflated. They seem to have acted accordingly. The first name on the list of resident property holders is "Hon. John Adams." Mr. Adams was then a man of fifty-seven, and filling the office of Vice-President of the United States. He owned in Braintree three houses, situated on two independent farms, both well supplied with farm buildings and implements. He was the fourth largest taxpayer in the town, his wife's uncle, Norton Quincy, being the largest, and as such called upon for a tax of £12 2s. 11d., or \$40.50. John Adams' real estate was valued by the assessors for purposes of taxation at 9s. 6d., or \$1.60, and his personal property at 3d., or about four cents; a total estate of \$1.63. Yet upon this estate he was called upon to pay a tax of \$28.50, for the total town levy of 1792 was £350, though the valuation was but £15 17s. Of the £350 the sum of £72 was to be derived from one hundred and ninety-two polls taxed 7s. 6d. each, £220 2s. 10d. from real estate valued at £12 9s. 4d., and £58 17s. 2d. from personal property appraised at £3 7s. 8d.

Such figures read like a burlesque; but they have their use as illustrating the value of the statistics upon which many of the conclusions of historical writers are based. Working from data of this sort, it is manifestly impossible to reach results of any value, either positively as respects the past, or com-

¹ Pattee, 622.

paratively as respects the past and the present. But, while this is the case as respects accumulation and the aggregate of wealth, it is not the case with the scale on which expenditure is conducted ; and, dealing with the New England towns, it is possible to make a comparison of periods which will be not altogether deceptive by taking as data the annual town levies and certain salaries paid through a long series of years ; and such a comparison may have a curious interest as well as some statistical value.

In the case of Braintree, for instance, the amount paid to the two ministers in 1657 was £110, and besides this there were other sums, of which no record remains, disbursed on account of the poor, the sick, and the insane. At the beginning of the next century the salary of Mr. Fiske was £90 a year. After the two precincts were divided the salary of Mr. Marsh, of the First Precinct, was £70 ; but Mr. Hancock's was £110. Then came the period of extreme currency disturbance, and Mr. Briant was to receive £62, which in the case of Mr. Wibird was, in 1755, raised to £100. This was before the division of the town ; but, approximately, it may be said that the total North Precinct levy was in 1656 not far from £100, and more than a century later, in 1770, including in both cases the salary of the minister, the expenses of the town had not increased to over £350.¹

In 1798 the question of a suitable salary for a colleague to Mr. Wibird was much discussed. A committee gave it "as their most mature judgment" that it would be best for the town to pay its minister annually such a sum "as will enable him to maintain himself and family comfortably and with such decency as will do honor to the society that supports them." And the opinion is then expressed that the sum of \$500 will afford a minister and his family "a decent support." Accordingly, in 1799, Mr. Whitney was settled in the town on a salary of \$550. In the following year the entire amount raised for town and parish purposes was \$3,000. In 1810 it was \$3,200, and in 1820 it had increased to \$4,000. These figures reveal most strikingly the stability and evenness of the scale of expense through the long period covered by them.

¹ Records, 428.

Between 1640 and 1820 the minister's salary increased from \$300 to \$750, and the total town and parish levy from \$350 to \$4,000. Ten years later, in 1830, the total town levy, then exclusive of any salaries paid to the clergy, was \$4,556.24; in 1890 it was \$196,717.87. The increase of salary through the first period of one hundred and eighty years was less than threefold, and that of town levy less than twelvefold; while in the second period of sixty years, the increase of levy was over forty-three fold.

That, except during periods of war, the eighteenth century Braintree community increased its belongings does not need to be said. Any community, every available member of which is brought up to do something, while its more active members work all day long every day in the week except Sunday, wasting nothing, utilizing everything, schooled from infancy in the severest economy and eternally striving to better its condition, — any community such as this, dwelling in a region not actually icebound or a desert, must accumulate from generation to generation. So the Braintree people accumulated. As each generation passed away it left more acres under cultivation, more houses, barns and farm-buildings, more furniture and household comforts, more cattle, tools and appliances. Yet this was all. Prior to 1830 there was no personal property in the modern sense of the word. Whatever the people had was tangible and in sight. There were no bonds or stocks locked away in safes. A few persons, — and they were very few, — having ready money amassed in trade, may have held some bank or turnpike shares; but the people of country towns had as yet scarcely begun to be educated in this respect, and their whole idea of property was the ownership of land and buildings. Money was made in trade; and the moneyed man was he who, having amassed some ready cash, put it into goods, or loaned it out to others on good security, usually bond and mortgage.

Thus the whole accumulation of the hundred and ninety years from 1640 to 1830 in a community like that of Braintree and Quincy was at home and on the surface. It showed for all it was worth. Accordingly, when John Adams returned to Braintree in 1788, after a ten years' absence in

Europe, he spoke of the increase of population as "wonderful," and was amazed at the plenty and cheapness of provisions; but "the scarcity of money," he wrote, "is certainly very great." And, again, John Quincy Adams, coming back to Quincy to his father's funeral in 1826, after years of absence, spoke with deep feeling of the changes he noticed as he sat in his father's place in the old church, but he added "it was a comforting reflection that the new race of men and women had the external marks of a condition much improved upon that of the former age." Yet it may well admit of question whether the entire accumulation of that village community in those two centuries, lacking only ten years, amounted to over a million and a half of dollars. Allowing for the goods and money which the original settlers brought over with them, this estimate supposes an average annual accumulation in the case of Braintree of only some \$7,000 a year. For an industrious, saving community of from 500 to 2,000 souls this seems small; and yet it is difficult to see how in the aggregate it could have been larger. In 1830 there were not over four hundred families in the town. The official valuation of their wealth exceeded \$800,000. For reasons which have already been given this valuation is entitled to no weight as respects accuracy; but, assuming that a fair valuation would have amounted to an aggregate of twice that sum, or \$1,600,000, — approximately the sum above estimated, — each family would then have had on the average property of some sort worth \$4,000. In view of the fact that absolutely no one in Quincy was in 1830 more than well-to-do, and many families had nothing, living from hand to mouth, it does not seem possible that this average could have been exceeded.

Nor, in the case of a Massachusetts coast-town like Braintree, are the sources of accumulated wealth during the colonial period at once apparent; for there do not seem in those towns to have been any recognized and established branches of trade or manufacture. The people were land-owners and laborers, the latter class including, of course, all skilled workmen and mechanics; and they in greatest degree lived on themselves and each other. Almost nothing, from a modern point of view, seemed to come in from without, or to go out from

within. Works, in which bog-ore was made into iron, were established at an early day in Weymouth, and also in West Quincy, but they did not prosper; shipbuilding, also, was carried on, though to a limited extent, from a period before the close of the seventeenth century. But industries of this character amounted to little; and, while the people had almost nothing to sell, they had to buy something in the way of clothes, furniture, utensils and the few articles of luxury they used. The question naturally arises, therefore,—From whence did they derive even the small amount of money requisite for these purchases?

It must in the first place always be borne in mind that these purchases were of the smallest possible description. Almost every house was in itself a factory, in which lap-stone and spinning wheel were in use; and, what was not produced at home, people, in so far as possible, did without. The life of the period was hard and self-denying. But, in the case of Braintree, as of all the other New England towns east of Narragansett Bay and north of Cape Cod, more careful investigation uniformly reveals the fact that the fisheries were the basis of colonial commerce, and consequently the beginning of wealth. Though communities might not themselves be actively engaged in the fisheries, they yet made their exchanges through them, and got such accumulation as they had from them. Trade with the West Indies was free. Vessels adapted to it were built at every convenient point along the coast, and these vessels, laden mainly with fish, and after fish with surplus farm produce, pipe-staves, lumber and live-stock, went out from the shipping-ports, chief among which was Boston, and, when not sold in England, as they often were, came back in due course of trade loaded with sugar, molasses, cotton, indigo, and bringing also bags of coined Spanish silver. There was moreover a prosperous trade with Spain, Portugal and the Canaries,—the Catholic fast-day countries,—in the course of which fish was exchanged for wine and specie; and this also was a source of steady gain.¹ And thus a slow, steady accretion went on; Boston, with its foreign commerce based on fish, farm products, such as corn

¹ Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England*, *passim*.

and live-stock, and rude manufactured articles like pipe-staves, being the mart to which everything the neighboring towns had to sell was brought by wagon, ox-team or packet; while from Boston was carried back to the neighboring towns the wet and dry goods, the finer manufactured articles of necessity or luxury, and finally the small balance of coin which represented the hard-earned and carefully hoarded excess in value of what was sold over what was bought. Except in the case of a few families, therefore, composing the gentry, who, like the Quincys, were engaged in foreign trade, or, like the Vassalls, were West India planters, the entire accumulation of Braintree until the end of the last century was represented in the dwellings of those inhabiting within its limits, and in their farms, — more and better buildings, clothing, furniture and utensils; larger and more commodious barns, new acres under cultivation; more oxen, horses, cows, sheep, and swine; and, behind it all, the little but ever, though slowly, growing hoards of silver money.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIAL LIFE.

WHILE speaking of the Braintree community prior to 1792 and of the Quincy community between 1792 and 1830, constant reference has been made to the class of landed gentry, whose presence influenced in a marked degree the character and development of the town. This class, it has been observed, was the legitimate offspring of the old English land-owners ; and in early Braintree there was one family more curiously typical of it than could elsewhere be found in New England. The record of the Quincy family is in fact probably unique even in the larger field of American history. Dwelling at the close of two centuries and a half on the same land which the original ancestor in this country bought of the Indian sachem who ruled over the Massachusetts Fields when Standish first landed at Squantum, the Quincys have in every generation maintained the same high public level. Never perhaps rising to the topmost prominence, either official or intellectual, the family record has yet in both respects been exceptionally uniform and sustained. That record is part of the history of the town which took its name from one member of the family.

As their name implies, the Quincys were of Norman stock. The probability is that an ancestor came over with William the Conqueror and fought at Hastings ; and a century and a half later the signature of a "Saer de Quincy" was affixed to the great charter of King John. When in the early years of the seventeenth century the Puritan movement spread through England, Edmund Quincy and his wife, Judith, were living on an estate which the husband had inherited from his father, another Edmund Quincy, and which was at Achurch, near Wigsthorpe, in Northamptonshire. Himself a Puritan,

when another Edmund Quincy was born in 1627, the local record shows that the child was "baptized elsewhere and not in our Parish Church." In 1633, being then in his thirty-second year, Edmund Quincy came to New England, a companion of John Cotton, landing in Boston on the 4th of September. He was almost immediately made a freeman, and his name is found afterwards not infrequently in the records of Boston. He died in 1637, shortly after the allotment at the Mount had been made to him. He and Governor William Coddington were of nearly the same age, and the grant of land to the two lay undivided for two years after Quincy's death. It may, therefore, be surmised that they were personal friends, and not impossibly it was Edmund Quincy's premature death which alone, in the Antinomian frenzy, prevented his sharing Coddington's troubles, and perhaps his exile. Though he died young, he left his name to a son and the name of his wife to a daughter. From a descendant of the latter sprang the Sewall family, and in her memory also the stormy, western cape of Narragansett Bay was called Point Judith.

The second Edmund Quincy, born in England in 1628, unlike his father, lived to a full old age. He is the "Uncle Quinsey" of Judge Sewall's diary, whose death is recorded on the 8th of January, 1698, as that of "a true New England man, and one of our best Friends." It was the dead of winter. His funeral took place four days later, — there having been frost "one and near two feet thick" encountered in digging his grave, — and he was "decently buried — three foot companies and one troop at his funeral." The pall-bearers "had Scarves," and Judge Sewall drove out from Boston to be present, picking up Madam Dudley on the way, who "seem'd to be glad of the Invitation and were mutually refreshed by our Company." It was this Edmund Quincy who built at Braintree the old colonial house still standing,¹ and between the years 1670 and 1692 he repeatedly represented the town in the General Court. A magistrate and the lieutenant-colonel of the Suffolk regiment, he reproduced the type of the English country gentleman in New England; and just as the

¹ *Supra*, 87.

former had gone up to the Long Parliament ripe for rebellion against Charles I., and half a century later had joined William of Nassau in the overthrow of James II., so Edmund Quincy, when Andros was "bound in chains and cords, and put in a more secure place," became naturally one of that Committee of Safety which carried on the government of the province until the charter of William and Mary was granted.

This Edmund Quincy left two sons, — Daniel, the child of his first wife (Joanna Hoar), sister of the president of the college, and Edmund, whose mother (Elizabeth Gookin) was the widow of John Eliot, Jr. Daniel Quincy was the father of that John Quincy, of Mount Wollaston, in whose honor the town of Quincy subsequently received its name. Of him it will be proper, therefore, presently to speak at length. Edmund, his younger half-brother, inherited the father's house and farm, and married Dorothy Flynt, already referred to as the common origin of that remarkable progeny, in which statesmen, jurists, lawyers, orators, poets, story-tellers and philosophers seem to vie with each other in recognized eminence. More distinguished than either his father or grandfather, the third Edmund Quincy passed nearly his whole life in the public service. Graduating in 1699, in 1713-14 he represented Braintree in the General Court, and became afterwards a member of the provincial Council. Colonel of the Suffolk regiment, he was in 1718 made one of the judges of the Superior Court, and in 1737, at the age of fifty-six, he was selected as the agent of the province to represent it before the English government in the matter of the disputed New Hampshire boundary. Reaching London in December, in the following February he was a victim of prevention, for he died from inoculated smallpox. He was buried in the graveyard which held the dust of Milton and Bunyan; and the General Court of Massachusetts caused a monument to be there erected to him as lasting evidence that he was "the delight of his own people, but of none more than of the Senate, who, as a testimony of their love and gratitude, have ordered this epitaph to be inscribed."

Judge Edmund Quincy had two sons, Edmund and Josiah. A portion of the land at Braintree came into the possession of

Josiah, and it was he who perpetuated the family, though the old mansion passed into other hands. A Boston merchant in his earlier life, this the first Josiah, so named after his grandfather Parson Josiah Flynt, suddenly acquired what was for those days a handsome competence through what one of his descendants has since happily described as "a rather singular adventure,"—an adventure so characteristic of the period and of what was, first and last, no insignificant source of New England wealth, that the story bears telling in detail. Mr. Quincy was at the time in business with his brother and brother-in-law.

In 1748 the partners owned a ship named the *Bethell*, which had been on a voyage to the Mediterranean. At that time England was engaged in the war with France and Spain which the Colonists distinguished as King George's War, and the Spanish privateers were the especial dread of English commerce. By way of precaution, the *Bethell* had taken out a letter of marque, and was armed, though six of her twenty guns appear to have been of the Quaker persuasion. Not long after issuing from the Straits into the Atlantic, she fell in, just at nightfall, with a ship of greatly superior force, under Spanish colors. Escape was impossible; so, instead of attempting it, she bore down upon the Spaniard, and peremptorily summoned her to surrender. The captain, by way of putting as good a face upon the matter as possible, made the best display he could of lanterns in the rigging, and had all the spare coats and hats which the sailors' chests contained picturesquely disposed, so as to make the enemy believe that his ship was full of men. The Spanish captain, after some demur and parley, taking the *Bethell* for an English sloop-of-war, struck his colors, and gave up his ship without firing a gun. His rage and that of his crew, on discovering the stratagem to which they had fallen victims, was infinite, but unavailing. The gallant captain of the *Bethell*, Isaac Freeman, whose name certainly deserves to be preserved, says, in his letter to his owners: "At Daylight we had the last of the Prisoners secured, who were ready to hang themselves for submitting, when they saw our Strength, having only fourteen Guns, besides six wooden ones; and you may easily imagine we had Care and Trouble enough with them till they were landed at Fyal." The *Jesus Maria* and *Joseph* was a "register ship," bound from Havana to Cadiz, with one hundred and ten men and twenty-six guns; while the *Bethell* had but thirty-seven men and fourteen guns. Her cargo "consisted of one hundred and sixty-one chests of silver and two of gold, registered," besides cochineal and other valuable commodities. The prize was brought safely into Boston, duly condemned, and the proceeds distributed. My great-aunt, Mrs. Hannah Storer, Mr. Quincy's daughter, who died in 1826, at ninety, used to describe the sensation this event caused in Boston; and how the chests of

doubloons and dollars were escorted through the streets, by sailors armed with pistols and cutlasses, to her father's house, at the corner of what is now Central Court and Washington Street, where they were deposited in the wine-cellar, and guard mounted over them by day and night while they remained there.

Wisely retiring from business in consequence of this happy chance the first Josiah Quincy passed his later years at Braintree, dwelling for a time in a house which stood on the "Hancock lot." This house was burned in May, 1759. In it John Adams, when a man of twenty-three, was wont to spend many evenings, and it was by mere chance that he did not marry one of its daughters. The methods of passing the time there may have partaken of the somewhat rude New England sociability of the period, or the young lawyer may have been suffering from a passing attack of spleen; but, after coming away from Col. Quincy's on one occasion, he wrote:—"Playing cards the whole evening. This is the wise and salutary amusement the young gentlemen take every evening in this town. Playing cards, drinking punch and wine, smoking tobacco, and swearing. . . . I know not how any young fellow can study in this town."

In his turn Josiah Quincy was colonel of the Suffolk regiment, and he was also through many years a warm personal friend and correspondent of Dr. Franklin. A man of active, inquiring mind, his only experience in public life was in 1755, the year of Braddock's defeat, when he served as a commissioner of the province in arranging joint military operations with the sister province of Pennsylvania. He left three sons, the youngest of whom, named after himself and known in history as Josiah Quincy, Jr., rose rapidly to distinction, and, had he not died at the early age of thirty-one, could hardly have failed to be one of the prominent political characters of the Revolution. With John Adams he defended Captain Preston after the so-called "Boston Massacre," and in 1774, when scarcely thirty years of age, he was the confidential agent in London of the patriot party. Dying on shipboard, almost in sight of his native New England coast, Josiah Quincy, Jr., left behind him an infant son, whose long and honorable life, beginning before the Revolution, outlasted

the War of the Rebellion. But President Josiah Quincy, of Harvard College, though he lived all his life on the family place at Quincy, always identified himself with the city of Boston. His history and fame are not part of the record of the town which bears his family name.

Recurring to the other seventeenth-century branch of the family, Daniel Quincy, the son of the second Edmund, was, on the maternal side, a grandson of Joanna Hoar, the widow of Charles Hoar, who was, during the reigns of the earlier Stuarts, for a time sheriff of the city of Gloucester, in England. About 1640, after the death of her husband, Joanna Hoar came to Massachusetts with her five children, and died in Braintree in December, 1661, where she sleeps in the old burying ground in a common grave with her son, the third president of Harvard College, and Bridget, the widow of that son and daughter of John Lisle by his wife, known in English history as the Lady Alice Lisle,¹ whose tragic fate, made familiar through the page of Macaulay, furnishes one of the historic incidents deemed worthy to be immortalized by the artist's hand on the walls of the entrance to the chambers of Parliament. The threads of human destiny are apt to interlace in a way calculated to excite surprise; and it is interesting in the old burying-ground of a New England town thus suddenly to come upon an inscription which tells him who stops to decipher it that the daughter of her whom Jeffries caused to be put to death for succoring the fugitives from Sedgmuir there lies buried.

But Joanna Hoar may well herself be remembered as the common origin of an offspring at once numerous and notable; for, besides the family bearing her own name, than which none has developed more strikingly or through longer periods the sterling characteristics and some of the peculiarities of New England manhood,—besides this family, honorably perpetuating her own and her husband's name, from her through one daughter, who married Henry Flint, is descended the remarkable progeny already referred to; while from another daughter, herself bearing the mother's name, came the elder branch of the Quincys,

¹ VI. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* v. 104, n.

issuing in Abigail Adams, her son, John Quincy, and his offspring. Among Joanna Hoar's other descendants are numbered, also, the family of Evarts, and the Baldwins and Terrys of Connecticut, including among their members the brilliant advocate who defended Andrew Johnson and the brave soldier whose name is associated with the gallant storming of Fort Fisher. Indeed, there is in the whole wide field of American genealogy no strain of blood which can compare with that which issued from the widow of the seventeenth century sheriff of Gloucester, who himself never crossed the Atlantic.

Daniel Quincy the eldest of the two sons of the second Edmund, was the grandson of Sheriff Hoar through his daughter, who also bore her mother's name, Joanna. In due time, Daniel Quincy married Anna Shepard, the granddaughter of the Rev. Thomas Shepard, of Cambridge. The marriage ceremony took place on the 9th of November, 1682, and the following quaint and striking account of what then occurred is found in the pages of Sewall:—

“Cousin Daniel Quinsey Marries Mrs. Anna Shepard Before John Hull, esq. Sam'l Nowell, esq. and many Persons present, almost Captain Brattle's great Hall full; Captain B. and Mrs. Brattle there for two. Mr. Willard began with prayer. Mr. Thomas Shepard concluded; as he was Praying, Cousin Savage, Mother Hull, wife and self came in. A good space after, when had eaten Cake and drunk Wine and Beer plentifully, we were called into the Hall again to Sing. In Singing Time Mrs. Brattle goes out, being ill; Most of the Company goe away, thinking it a qualm or some Fit; But she grows worse, speaks not a word, and so dyes away in her chair, I holding her feet (for she had slipt down). At length out of the Kitching we carry the chair, and Her in it, into the Wedding Hall; and after a while lay the Corps of the dead Aunt in the Bride-Bed: So that now the strangeness and horror of the thing filled the (just now) joyous House with Ejulation: The Bridegroom and Bride lye at Mr. Airs, son-in-law to the deceased, going away like Persons put to flight in Bat-tel.”

There were two children born of this marriage, a daughter, Ann, in 1685, and a son, John, in 1689. The year following Daniel Quincy died. He seems always to have lived in Boston, where he followed the trade of goldsmith, and in Boston his son was born; but circumstances seemed to draw the Quineys towards Braintree. When William Coddington left

Massachusetts he gradually disposed of his property there, and in 1639 the greater part of his allotment at Mount Wollaston was purchased by William Tyng, a Boston merchant. Thomas Shepard had married a daughter of this William Tyng, and the farm at Mount Wollaston, in 1661, passed by inheritance into Mrs. Shepard's hands. In 1677, five years before Anna Shepard married Daniel Quincy, her father, Thomas Shepard, had died, but her mother, William Tyng's daughter and the owner of Mount Wollaston, lived until August, 1709. Mrs. Daniel Quincy, it has already been seen, married the Rev. Moses Fiske in 1701, and died in July, 1708; accordingly Mrs. Shepard, surviving her daughter, left the farm at Mount Wollaston in 1709 to her grandson, John Quincy, who had graduated from Harvard College one year before.

Coming into possession of the property at this early age, young John Quincy, in 1715, married Elizabeth Norton, daughter of the Rev. John Norton, third pastor of the Hingham Church, and on Tuesday, October 4th, of that year, Judge Sewall records that he gave him "a Psalm-book covered with Turkey-Leather for his Mistress." At about this time, being already a major in the Suffolk regiment, John Quincy built his house at Mount Wollaston, and went to Braintree to live. Two years later, in 1717, he was first sent to represent the town in the General Court, and he continued to represent it at intervals through forty years, his last term of service being in 1757. From 1719 to 1741 his service was consecutive, and from 1729 to 1739 he was Speaker of the House. Paul Dudley was then chosen to the place, but Governor Shirley negatived him, and John Quincy was re-chosen. In 1742 he became a member of the Council, and again in 1746, continuing in it until 1754, after which he again became a delegate for three years. He was now sixty-eight years old, and seems to have retired from active life to pass the remainder of his days at Mount Wollaston. We there get a glimpse of him through the memoranda of John Adams, who, on Christmas-day, 1765, says he "drank tea at grandfather Quincy's. The old gentleman inquisitive about the hearing before the Governor and Council; about the Gov-

ernor's and Secretary's looks and behavior, and about the final determination of the Board. The old lady as merry and chatty as ever, with her stories out of the newspapers." The hearing here referred to which excited the old councillor's interest was that before Governor Barnard on the memorial of the town of Boston, at the time of the Stamp Act riots, that the courts of law should be opened.

For a number of years John Quincy was colonel of the Suffolk regiment, but in 1742 he lost that position through the intrigues of Joseph Gooch.¹ John Adams has left a lively description of this affair, in which at the time he felt a boy's keen interest; for his own father was in the regiment, and was offered a captain's commission by Gooch, — an offer which "he spurned with disdain; would serve in the militia under no colonel but Quincy." Early appointed a magistrate, for years and years the name of John Quincy — or Col. John Quincy, Esq., as the form of those days went — appears in the Braintree records as moderator of every town-meeting. In the parish also he was the leading man. Not only, after the usage of the period, was he noted for "a strict observance of the Lord's day, and a constant attendance upon the public ordinances of religion," but he presided at the parish meetings, and it was he who served as chairman of the committee which in 1753 investigated the charges against Mr. Briant. John Adams describes him as "a man of letters, taste, and sense," as well as "an experienced and venerated statesman;" but it is a curious fact of one so prominent that not a letter or paper of his, or even a book known to have belonged to him, now remains in the possession of his descendants. After his death and through a period of forty years his estate, and everything belonging to him, fell into complete neglect. Yet if, as chairman of the committee, John Quincy wrote the report on the charges against Mr. Briant, that document alone, in its pure, simple language and broad, liberal tone, is evidence enough that John Adams' tribute to him was not

¹ Further information in regard to this singular character can be obtained from John Adams, *Works*, ii. 92; Pattee, *Old Braintree and Quincy*, 369-71; *Hist. of Milton*, 130; and article (12,503) in *Boston Evening Transcript*, Notes and Queries, of March 17, 1888.

undeserved. One passage in it may serve as a sample of the whole, for it breathes the true spirit which inspires every large-minded searcher for truth; and it was a large-minded man who wrote it. Referring to the charge that Mr. Briant had at his ordination made a profession of faith, the committee in its report denies the fact; but then does not fear to add that, even "if he had made any such profession, it could not destroy his right of private judgment, nor be obligatory upon him any further than it continued to appear to him agreeable to reason and Scripture." And, again, it had been charged that Mr. Briant had recommended a certain book doctrinally unsound "to the prayerful perusal of one or more of his parishioners." The committee replied that his so doing "was worthy a Protestant minister; and we cannot but commend our pastor for the pains he takes to promote a free and impartial examination into all articles of our holy religion, so that *all may judge, even of themselves, what is right.*" A country parish in which such sentiments as these were officially set forth in the year 1753 was well advanced on the path which led to revolution, both political and religious.

Among those of his own day John Quincy "was as much esteemed and respected as any man in the province." Enjoying what was then looked upon as an ample fortune, "he devoted his time, his faculties, and his influence to the service of his country," studiously avoiding "an ensnaring dependency on any man, and whatever should tend to lay him under any disadvantage in the discharge of his duty." He filled almost every public office to which a native-born New Englander could in the colonial days aspire. Colonel in the militia, Speaker of the House, member of the Council, he also negotiated Indian treaties, and in 1727 the remnant of the Punkapog tribe, abused and defrauded, petitioned that he might be appointed their guardian. For nearly twenty years he held this trust, then resigning it "by reason of his distance" from his wards. Finally, in all positions he approved himself "a true friend to the interest and prosperity of the province; a zealous advocate for and vigorous defender of its liberties and privileges."

This detailed sketch of John Quincy is a necessary feature

in the history of Braintree as a typical Massachusetts town of the colonial period; for John Quincy was a typical man of that period. He represented, perhaps more completely than any other member even of the remarkable family to which he belonged, a political and social element in New England life which has since disappeared. He belonged to the class which in England produced John Hampden, — the educated country gentlemen, the owners of the broad acres on which they dwelt. Following no profession, but going up to Parliament year after year, they were the loyal, ingrained representatives of the communities of which they were a part. Of these men Washington was a Virginia offshoot. He represented them in their highest phase of development under Southern surroundings, — plain, true, straightforward, self-respecting, gifted with that perfectly balanced common-sense which in its way is one sort of genius. Favorable circumstances, always availed of, brought Washington to the front, and have made of him an American immortality. Yet in America at that time, as in the Stoke-Pogis churchyard, there were doubtless many men who contained within themselves the possibilities of a Hampden, a Milton, or a Cromwell. That John Quincy contained those elements cannot be asserted, for of him now nothing remains except a name and a few dates. His grave, even, is not marked, nor its place known; but, none the less, throughout a long life lived in the land he was a good specimen of the sturdy, common-sensed, high-toned class of English gentlemen in the shape New England reproduced them in colonial days. What under other circumstances he might have proved, it would be idle to surmise. Born and dying a colonist in a small provincial community thickly crusted over with theology, and in freedom of thought and fancy hardly more than childish, he and those of his time had scant room for development. The stage was small, and its atmosphere was icy.

In one respect, however, John Quincy was singularly fortunate. Though scarcely a line of his writing remains, though his public services are forgotten, though his grave is unknown and his only son died childless, yet his name survives. When, in 1792, the original town of Braintree was subdivided, the

Rev. Anthony Wibird "was requested to give a name to the place. He refusing to do so, a similar request was made to the Hon. Richard Cranch, who recommended its being called Quincy, in honor of Col. John Quincy."¹ Nor was this the only form in which the name was perpetuated. Colonel Quincy had two children, a son named Norton in honor of his mother's family, and a daughter, who became in time the wife of William Smith, of Weymouth. Among the children of this couple was one who, in October, 1764, married John Adams. In July, 1767, as old John Quincy lay dying at Mount Wollaston, this granddaughter of his gave birth to a son, and when, the next day, as was then the practice, the child was baptized, its grandmother, who was present at its birth, requested that it might be called after her father. Long afterwards the child thus named wrote of this incident:—"It was filial tenderness that gave the name. It was the name of one passing from earth to immortality. These have been among the strongest links of my attachment to the name of Quincy, and have been to me through life a perpetual admonition to do nothing unworthy of it."

In the year 1791, Miss Hannah Adams, the historian, in writing to John Adams, made reference to the "humble obscurity" of their common origin. Her correspondent, in reply, while acknowledging the kinship, went on energetically to remark that, could he "ever suppose that family pride were any way excusable, [he] should think a descent from a line of virtuous, independent New England farmers for a hundred and sixty years was a better foundation for it than a descent through royal or noble scoundrels ever since the flood." The "virtuous, independent New England farmers" here described were to the full as important a social and political element in colonial days as the gentry. They represented the free yeomanry of England under the new conditions, just as the gentry represented the landholders. But it has already been noticed that the New England farmer, as a rule, did not pay rent. He was the owner of the land on which he lived and a freeholder,—the equal of any one. This holding of the fee it was which gave him his individu-

¹ Whitney, *Hist. of Quincy*, 27.

ality. He ceased to be the cultivator of another's ground and himself had a stake in the country. Accordingly, he became an influence second to none other in the shaping of New England development. His influence, too, was immensely conservative. Not quick of thought, he was the reverse of receptive of new ideas; and, when money entered into the question, he was mean. Accustomed in his struggle for subsistence to extort everything he got from a niggard soil, he watched public expenditure with a cold, saving eye, and in town-meeting could be safely counted upon to raise his voice against anything which was likely to impose a burden on his acres. Subsequent history showed this clearly. Questions of taxation appealed to him at once, and a freedom from all imposts not voted by himself most nearly embodied his idea of independence. In the sphere of his narrow village life, far removed from great cities, he saw round about him but two classes of men to whom he in any way looked up, — the clergy and the gentry, the minister and the squire. So far as means and mode of life were concerned, those composing these classes were not very different from himself; they, as well as he, led simple lives. All mingled in the streets, at church and in town-meeting, with an equality which was not the less mutually respectful because it was real. In the gentry and clergy, therefore, the farmer saw nothing to which he might not aspire for his own child. There was no privileged class; no suggestion of caste, or rank, or nobility. If the small farmer chose by dint of severe economy to send his son to college, that son would be a minister or a lawyer, and might marry into the gentry. Accordingly, the farmer was very apt to send one son at least to college.

As Edmund and John Quincy were in Braintree typical of the gentry, so Deacons Samuel Bass and John Adams were typical of the farmer class. Through the whole colonial period the deacon was held in high respect; on the Sabbath he sat on his own bench before the pulpit, and on the week-day he and the magistrate and the officers of the militia were the titled men of the village. Speaking of a kinsman of his, Oxenbridge Thacher used to say, — "Old Col. Thacher, of Barnstable, was an excellent man; he was a very holy man; I

used to love to hear him pray; he was a counselor and a deacon. I have heard him say that of all his titles, that of a deacon he thought the most honorable." Braintree's first deacon, Samuel Bass, has already been referred to as the progenitor of a numerous offspring, for at the time of his death he had seen one hundred and sixty-two descendants. Born in 1601, he came over to New England in 1632, and first settled at Roxbury; from whence, in 1640, he removed to Braintree, there purchasing lands which for over two centuries remained in the hands of his descendants. He was received into the communion of the church in July, 1640, and chosen deacon, which office he held until his death, in 1694. A small two-handled cup of plain silver in the communion service of the First Church yet bears his name and title inscribed upon it as one of its givers. Active also in civil life, Deacon Bass represented the town in no less than twelve General Courts between 1641 and 1664. In 1645 he was on the committee to see that the town-marsh should "be improved to the Elders' use," and for several years he was one of three, empowered by the court to "end small cases in Braintree under twenty shillings." In 1653 he received fifteen votes out of a total of forty-one for the position of ruling elder in the church, and two years later he was one of the commission appointed by the General Court to build a cart-bridge over the Neponset. Thus —

" His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure the eternal Master found
His single talent well employ'd."

In 1657 a son of Deacon Bass, John by name, married Ruth Alden, the daughter of John and Priscilla Alden, of Plymouth and Mayflower fame. By her he had a daughter, Hannah, born in June, 1667. This Hannah Bass presently married Joseph Adams, of Braintree, and on the 8th of February, 1692, she gave birth to John Adams, afterwards in his turn deacon of the First Precinct church. This John Adams, therefore, was the great-grandson of the original Deacon Bass, and one of the hundred and sixty-two descendants born to him before his death. John Adams was in his turn

a typical New England yeoman. He lived on his farm, through which ran the main street of the town, dying in 1761, "beloved, esteemed, and revered by all who knew him," having had seven children, the eldest of whom, also named John, he had sent to college. The life of the elder John Adams well illustrates what has been called¹ "the sturdy, unostentatious demeanor of those who filled the minor places of usefulness" in early New England. For nearly forty years his name regularly appears in the records of the town. He passed through all its grades of office; for in 1722, he being then by occupation a "cordwainer," or maker of shoes, was chosen "sealer of leather." In 1724 he was tythingman, and in 1727 constable, or collector of taxes. In 1734 he was an ensign in the militia, and also selectman; and a little later, having become lieutenant, he volunteered to take care of the town powder, providing a chest for it in his own house, which he thus converted into a magazine. Between 1740 and 1749, being still Lieutenant Adams, he is nine times selectman. It was in one of the earlier of these years that his military life came to an end as the result of Joseph Gooch's intrigues to supersede Col. John Quincy. Loyal to his commanding officer, Lieut. John Adams, it will be remembered, refused "with disdain" the offer of a captaincy from Gooch. But in May, 1747, he had taken his place among the deacons on the bench before the pulpit, and in 1752 he reappears in the records among the selectmen as Deacon John Adams, and is chosen through four successive years, and again in 1758; fourteen years in all, did he fill the office, "almost all the business of the town being managed by him." He was now in his sixty-seventh year, and his name is found but once more in the records, and then only in connection with a way through his land. He died in a season of epidemic three years later. Long after, in referring to him, his son wrote that he could not adequately express the exalted opinions he had "of his wisdom and virtue," and that he was "a man of strict piety and great integrity; much esteemed and beloved wherever he was known, which was not far, his sphere of life being not extensive."

¹ Hobart, *Centennial* (1876) *Oration at Braintree*, 22.

If the Quineys — Judges and Colonels — furnish perfect types of the colonial gentry, as Deacon Bass and Lieutenant John Adams do of the colonial yeomanry, so an equally perfect type of the colonial skilled workman and non-commissioned officer is furnished in John Marshall, sometime treasurer of the North Precinct in Braintree. John Marshall, born in Boston in 1664, passed the greater portion of his working life in Braintree. His regular trade seems to have been that of mason, but, when work in that line was dull, he made a living by turning his hand to almost any occupation, seeking a job wherever it could be found. So, without apparently owning any land, he at times farmed on a small scale, made laths in winter, painted houses, did carpenter work, burned brick, bought and sold live-stock, and acted as a messenger. He was also a non-commissioned officer in the Braintree company of the Suffolk regiment, and an active member of the church, being for a time precinct treasurer; his name appears frequently in the town records, usually as constable, but sometimes as tithing-man or surveyor of highways; and, as constable, John Marshall in 1700 paid to Samuel Belcher twenty-five shillings "in full satisfaction for keeping Mary Owen on the Towns account" for one year; Mary Owen being, it will be remembered, "ebenezer Owens destracted daughter," Ebenezer Owen himself having died of small-pox during the Quebec expedition of 1690, and been "thrown overbord at Cap an." John Marshall died in October, 1632, having been during his sixty-eight years of life "much esteemed" in his station, and, as the record sometimes expressed it, "Improved in the Town in many Offices of publick Trust."

Between the years 1697 and 1711 Marshall was in the habit of jotting down in a little memorandum book, which has been preserved, items of interest to him, whether relating to his private affairs or to public occurrences. Some of these jottings have now become curious as affording glimpses of the daily life and modes of thought of a laboring man in the New England of two centuries ago. Marshall lived on what he could earn, and his usual wages as a mason were four shillings, or sixty-seven cents, a day, about the equivalent of \$3.50 a day now. He found his more regular employment in Brain-

tree, but sought odd jobs in Boston and on Castle Island, as well as in Hingham, Weymouth, Milton, Dorchester and elsewhere. He was very religious, and his diary contains entries like the following : —

“This is written October 1st in the evening, and to-morrow is my birthday. I am now forty years old, and cannot but be ashamed to look back and consider how I have spent my lost time ; being at a great losse whether any true grace be wrought in my soul or no : corruption in me is very powerful ; grace (if any) is very weak and languid. I have reason to pray as the spous, awake o north wind, and come thou south wind and blow upon my garden, to stir up myself to take hold of God, to engage my cry to the Lord and my whole man in his service, which the Lord enable me to doe.”

He notes how he made laths, — six hundred in two days, — “watched with Mr. Quinsey,” — dug and bricked Mr. Quincy’s grave, — “went to Boston to lecture,” and “mended Doctor Hoar’s monument.” Early in 1690 Marshall seems to have been clerk and accounting officer of the Braintree company, and he wrote, “it was then ordered by the malitia that a military watch be kept in this towne of half a company a night. Our company watched the 6 and 7 of Aprill. In the two nights we spent in drink 6s. 4d., in candles 8d., one shilling taken between father and self.” In 1699 the Earl of Bellomont reached New England, the newly appointed Governor of the Province, and Marshall went to Boston, apparently with his company, to take part in the reception, for which great preparations were made : —

“Ther was I think twenty companys of souldiers, of which three were troops, and such a vast concourse of people as my poor eys never saw the like before : the life-guard went to Roadisland to wait on him : two troops went to Dedham to meet him their : and when he came to Boston we made a guard, from the end of the town to the South meeting house. The life guard rode foremost then came some officers : next his Lordship and Countess : then the troops and other gentlemen : the drums beat, the trumpets did sound, the Coullors weer displayed : the Cannons and ordinance from the ships and fortifications did roar : all manner of expressions of Joy : and to end all Fireworks and good drink at night.”

Marshall then notes his contributions to the support of the church, — three shillings in 1700, five shillings and fourpence in 1702, three shillings and eight pence in 1703 ; — he mentions the death of the Rev. Mr. Ichabod Wiswall of Duxbury,

“a man of eminent accomplishment for the service of the sanctuary,” and in December, 1701, reviewing the occurrences of the year, he says : —

“God frowned on the Land by the death of our governor the earle of Bellomont Last March And by the death of the Deputy Gouvernour Stoughton in July Last past, and sundry others of great worth dyed this year as the Rev^d. Mr. William Brimsmead, of Marlborough. Yet among all these sad providences God remembered mercy for his poor people by speriting the remaining of our Councillors to their work. By which the Country was put into a posture of defence against enemies.”

A year later, speaking of an epidemic of small-pox which had then been raging for some time, Marshall wrote : —

“Through the great mercy of God we in Braintree weer in health thus far in this sick and dying time, only a few children weer sick. But at Boston many dyed although the feaver was not so bad now as in time past, yet the small pocks was very Bad. So that I may truly call to mind the words of the prophet, the Lords anger is not turned away. But his hand is stretched out still.”

On June 13, 1704, “was a muster in Braintree to press men for the Country’s survise, among whom I was impressed, for one :” next day he says “I went to the Governour and got a clearance from the impress.” Three years later, in March, 1707, Marshall agrees “to serve in the office of constable for Nath^l Spear for three pounds money,” and then, on the 31st of that month, he writes, —

“At home Gathering stones out of the lott, and so this cool, windy month of March is marched away. And indeed it was right march many weathers : sometime cold : then hot, then cold, then wet, then dry : it was a time of genral health.”

In June, 1769, another impressment was ordered of soldiers for the Canada expedition, and now Marshall “pressed James Puffer and Jabez,” and then remarks : “we had our army in pay all this month ; nothing done by them, only eat and drink and run the country in debt.” In 1710 he remarks at the close of February, “the month ends well with them that are in health and have store of money.” But in the following August he was again impressed and notes, “8-9 weer idle days seeking to hire a man,” and at the close of the month he says, “I was impressed to go forth in her majesties service. My circumstances not allowing me to go out myself, I there-

fore hired Nathaniel Owen in my room, who was well accepted by Major Taylor, muster-master. And I paid him ten pounds money."

Such was a country mechanic in Massachusetts in the latter part of the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth. Such was his life and such his line of thought, leading him to comment on the Rev. Samuel Willard, vice-president of Harvard College, at the time of that eminent divine's death, as "a person of excelent accomplishments natural and acquired: an hard student, a powerful preacher of the word of God, an exemplary christian: a mirror of all that is good." ¹

¹ Lunt, *Two Discourses* (1839), 108-12; *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Series II. i. 148-62.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICIOUS, THE POOR AND THE INSANE.

WHILE the individuals whose lives have been sketched represented the gentry and yeomanry of the province, it must not be supposed that those classes made up the whole of that community. This was not the case. They were its distinctive types only. The body of that community, like those of all communities, was composed of laboring people; and, while in Braintree the richest were poor, there is ample evidence that the poorest did not live in abundance. On the contrary, besides the ordinary laborer who simply made his living, there was a curious pauper class, traces of which appear all through the records, living in hovels on the waste land and picking up a living in unknown ways. Those composing this class were not peculiar to Braintree, and it has been surmised that the denizens of the groups of wretched hovels in places locally known by such names as "Purgatory"¹ and "Hell-huddle," or the like, while in many instances the degenerate offspring of a sound New England stock, yet in other cases "show strong points of resemblance to that 'white trash,' which has come to be a recognizable strain of the English race," and they have been classed with the "redemptioners," or immigrants, common in the middle colonies but rare in New England, who voluntarily bound themselves to service for a stated time in order to defray the cost of their passage over from Europe.² While this may be generally true, yet, so far as traces of this class are to be met with in the Braintree records, they do not seem to call for much explanation. They were merely the natural residuum of existing social conditions,—that inevitable, though varying, percentage of the

¹ *Records*, 349.

² Fiske, *Beginnings of New England*, 142-3.

vicious, the shiftless and the weak always to be found in every population, no matter how thrifty and energetic, or moral and temperate; and, while the inhabitants of colonial New England were as a race remarkable for thrift and energy, they were less conspicuous for morality and most decidedly intemperate.

Left to take care of themselves, the law of the survival of the fittest, though then not understood, worked slowly, but in that rugged climate with terrible certainty, on these transient denizens of the waste places. They died out. When Quincy was set off, in 1792, one of the first things the selectmen did was to warn fourteen adults, seven of whom had families, to "depart the limits of the town." Throughout the records of the whole colonial period, down even to the year 1830, the heavy proportion which the expense of maintaining the poor bears to all other public charges is most noticeable. It was far heavier than it now is, and it showed a continual tendency to disproportionate growth. In 1770 for instance, out of a total expenditure of only £245, or \$820, no less than £90, or thirty-six per cent. of the whole, was spent in assisting the poor. The outlay on this account very nearly equalled that on account of the schools. A century later, though the amount spent on the care of the poor was considered so large that it excited criticism and led to a loud demand for reform, it was but eight per cent. of the total amount assessed and thirty per cent. of that expended on the schools. As compared with the aggregate of town expenses, the amount spent on the care of the poor was therefore, in Braintree, nearly five times as large in 1770 as it was in Quincy in 1870. And yet the charity of those earlier days was cold. Indeed, anything colder could not well be conceived. It acknowledged in the poor and the unfortunate a right to live; and that was all. On this point the record is instructive.

It opens with the town-meeting of December 24, 1694, when the earliest specific appropriation ever recorded in Braintree was made. The first item of it reads:—"Five pounds for John Belcher's widow's maintenance; thirty shillings to Thomas Revell for keeping William Dimblebee." But the unfortunate Dimblebee had already gone to his rest, and this

payment was for service performed, as a little further on seven shillings is appropriated "for Dimblebee's coffin." Before this entry of 1694 there is one other which throws a gleam of ghastly light on a subject which in recent years has been much discussed. It has been somewhat the fashion to assert that for certain reasons, traceable to local peculiarities of life or thought, insanity is in New England on the increase, and the census tables have been confidently appealed to in support of this startling theory. Those advocating it have seemed to forget that social statistics are of recent invention, and that the charitable systems of some communities are more perfect than those of others. To compare the showing as respects insanity of a community which now carefully gathers the demented together and tenderly cares for them in hospitals, with the showing of that same community before its demented were cared for at all, is sufficiently absurd: yet even this is far less absurd than it is to compare the record of such a community with that of some other community which still leaves its insane tied in attics and cellars, or wandering in the streets, or, at best, shut up in a poor-house; and then to argue that the first community, because it cares for the insane and numbers them, is afflicted with an epidemic of insanity from which the last community, because it neither cares for or numbers them, is exempt. It is a mistake to suppose that our age has been fruitful of new social or physical evils. There is a world of truth in Macaulay's remark, when treating of these questions, that the social and physical ills which so shock us now are, with scarcely an exception, old; "that which is new is the intelligence which discerns and the humanity which remedies them."

Here is the first record relating to the treatment of the insane poor of Braintree town, under date of 1689:—

"It was voted that Samuel Speer should build a little house, seven foot long and five foot wide, and set it by his house to secure his sisters, good wife Witty being distracted, and provide for her, and the town by vote agreed to see him well payed and satisfied which shall be thought reasonable."

The wretched maniac was chained like a dog in a kennel which stood by her brother's house. Then again, in 1697, the

"freeholders orderly convened" voted "five pounds for the healing of Abigail Neal, now underhand," and a committee of two, one of whom was the town treasurer, was appointed "to transport and take care of her." Where the poor creature was carried, or who contracted to "take care of her," nowhere appears, nor, among human affairs now nearly two centuries old, is it of much account; but, in 1700, the record reads again, in language hardly less significant of cold, merciless brutality than that used in the case of "good wife Witty Speer: " —

"Voted, That Mr. John Bayly, of Roxberry, should have five pounds monney for keeping Abigail Neale. Provided he give the Town noe further Trouble about her: " —

But Abigail Neal was not yet, nor in this way, to be got rid of; and the next year Dr. Bayley had to be voted eight pounds more, accompanied again with the condition that he should "take up therewith and give the Town no Farther Trouble." The year following Abigail cost the town thirty-eight shillings, and the year after that twenty shillings; and at last, in 1707, it was bargained with one "Samuel Bullard, of Dedham or Dorchester," that he should take the unfortunate creature and keep her for eighteen pence a week; and if he cured her he should have ten pounds, but, if he failed to cure her, only twenty shillings. The records contain no further trace of Abigail Neal. But at the same time "Ebenezer Owen's destracted daughter" had to be cared for, and the selectmen accordingly in 1699 are instructed to treat with Josiah Owen "and give him Twenty pounds money provided he gives bond under his hand to cleare the Town forever of said girle." Mary Owen was no more to be so disposed of than Abigail Neal, and in 1706 forty shillings a year was voted Josiah Owen for her care.

Such in those days — "good old days" — was the provision made for the insane, — a kennel in which to "secure" them, or eighteen pence a week for care, or twenty pounds provided bond was given "to clear the town forever of said girle." The poor were treated with consideration not much more tender. In 1710, for instance, "John Penniman of Swansey" having apparently obtained in some way a legal residence in

Braintree, it is voted that "Twelve pounds be raised" for him, "provided that the Town be forever cleared of him;" and eighteen months later, Samuel Penniman, in consideration of the "above named Twelve pounds money," binds himself "to find my Brother the above said John Penniman with good and sufficient meat, drink, apparell, washing and Lodging, and with all other things necessary and convenient in sickness and in health during the time and terme of his natural life." John Penniman, therefore, seems at a not unreasonable public charge, to have been well fixed for the remainder of his existence. But some of the votes have a more human ring, as, in 1729, when William Taunt, "by breaking his legg and being long lame and uncapable of business, he was reduced to low circumstances; and therefore desired of the town the loan of five Pounds for a year," the town voted him the amount "for his relief not to be Repaid."

In old Braintree there was no almshouse, nor any regular system of caring for the poor, until shortly before the division of the town. Paupers were either aided at their own abodes, or the care of them farmed out on the lowest attainable terms, either for the time being, or, as in the case of John Penniman, with the condition that on payment of a lump sum "the Town be forever cleared of him." Occasionally some special provision was made for their housing, as when in 1701 it was voted that "Nathaniel owen should have five pounds allowed him next Town Rate Towards the erecting of a Room for the entertaining and taking care of his Father and mother. Provided the said owen will doe it."¹ At last, in 1786, only six years before Quincy was incorporated as an independent town, and at the close of a century and a half of corporate existence, an almshouse was built in the Middle Precinct as the result of an agitation on the subject which began at least as early as 1740, and in the course of which the adjoining town of Milton had at one time proposed that such a house should be built on common account. This proposition was declined; but twenty years later, the spirit of conservatism was so far overcome that it was voted "a Power be lodged in the Hands of the Overseers of the Poor to hire a

¹ See Bliss, *Colonial Times on Buzzard's Bay*, 96-100, 203-6.

House if they see cause." At last, in 1786, the erection of a species of barrack "sixty-eight feet in Length, fourteen feet wide, with two Stacks of Chimneys," was ordered, as a "receptacle for the Poor," and the following year it was voted that no relief should be given to any except "to such as are or may be deposited in the Towns Hows Built for that purpose." The appointment of an overseer of the poor having then been agitated for thirteen years, Capt. Jonathan Thayer was now chosen to the position, and subsequently allowed £3 12s. for a year's services, or about one dollar a month; certainly not an inordinate salary if measured by nineteenth century standards, nor would there seem to be any occasion for surprise that, when again chosen "overseer of the Towns Poor" in March, 1787, Captain Thayer asked to be excused. He was excused accordingly, and Captain Silas Ward chosen in his place; to whom a year later the sum of £6, or twenty dollars, was voted, "for his trouble in providing necessaries for the Poor and looking after and taking cair of them the year past, and Up to this day."

Throughout the eighteenth century the providing for the needs of the town poor — entailing as it did the duty of hunting them up at the places where they made their abodes — was one of the most important and irksome duties of the selectmen. It was also a fruitful source of jobbery. John Adams describes how the moment a selectman was elected, he was importuned for "the privilege of supplying the poor with wood, corn, meat, etc." He then had to visit them, and, if he found they had a legal residence in another town, return them to it. After the division of the original town in 1792, Quincy adopted the practice of putting the care of its poor up at public auction, to be knocked down to those who would undertake it at the lowest price. In 1813 this price averaged "\$1.42 each per week, exclusive of sickness and funeral charges." In 1806, also, it was voted that "the medical care of the poor be let out by the selectmen to the physician who will undertake that charge at the lowest price." Naturally this method of dealing with pauperism put a premium on its increase, and, instead of improving, affairs steadily grew worse, so that, strange as it now seems, during the six years

between 1808 and 1813, both inclusive, out of \$18,200 levied by taxation to meet necessary town and parish expenses, \$6,205, or more than one third of the whole, went to the support of the poor; and in 1816, while \$800 was spent on the schools, the poor cost \$1,600. Even at that late day, forty years after independence was achieved, the support of the town poor cost more than either church or schools. As will presently be seen, the matter was then vigorously taken hold of, and the abuse reformed. Nevertheless, the evidence all points to the conclusion that, in proportion to the total of all expenses, the cost of maintaining the poor prior to 1820 was several times what it now is in any well-regulated town, and in Quincy it still amounted as in 1770 to nearly one half of the town expenses, those of the parish being deducted. When, seventy years later, in 1889, the town was incorporated as a city, it amounted to less than one tenth. Undoubtedly carelessness and want of system in extending relief had much to do with this excess; but, making all due allowance for this, it is difficult, judging from the facts as recorded in the Braintree records, to avoid the inference that there is proportionally much less extreme poverty in the modern than there was in the colonial New England town. Pauperism has distinctly decreased. This is not generally supposed to have been the case; should it prove to be so, a partial explanation, at least, of the fact will probably be found in the more temperate habits of the people. This subject will have presently to be considered by itself. Meanwhile it is only necessary here to say that if rum, gin and cider were now sold as publicly and used as freely in Quincy as they were there sold and used sixty years ago, or prior to 1830, the increase of pauperism and vice could doubtless be studied both clearly and profitably in the tax-rate and the returns of the almshouse.

In Braintree and Quincy, as in all the other Massachusetts towns, these social problems, of which pauperism was one and the care of the insane another, were, until a comparatively recent date, disposed of in what is commonly known as the plain, practical, business-like way. Unfortunately the problems were complex; so the plain, practical way of disposing of them proved not to be the right way. Insanity and

pauperism could not be permanently hustled out of sight by a town-meeting vote; nor could the charge of the poor and insane be disposed of beyond the current year to those who would take the job at the lowest rate. Though excellent for certain purposes, it had yet to be made plain that the town-meeting was not adapted to every purpose, and least of all could it work to results through what is now known as a scientific method. As a means for dealing with complex social problems government by town-meeting is, therefore, not a success. It can in fact no more deal successfully with these problems than it could make discoveries in chemistry or astronomy. But poverty, intemperance, ignorance and vice are found everywhere; the town government is found only in New England: and it is the object of the present work to deal rather with those institutions which are peculiar to New England than with problems common to all mankind. It is of interest here, therefore, only to show how those problems were dealt with through the machinery of New England town government. That the plain people were not scientists is obvious; but it is equally obvious that, though intensely conservative, and very slow of movement, they did, through their failures and under the pressure of circumstances, grope their way to some results. Those results may not have been great, nor always correct; but, such as they were, they were at least the results of those who worked them out: and, in working them out, these people learned to depend on themselves. This educational work at least was always going on; and it was all-important. In comparison with it the systematic regulation of the poor, or even the proper care of the insane, were things of little moment.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MEETING-HOUSE.

WHEN John Adams was minister of the federated States at the English Court, a certain Major Langbourne, of Virginia, one day dined with him, and in the course of their table-talk noticed, rightfully enough, the difference of character between Virginia and New England. John Adams then goes on :—

“I offered to give him a receipt for making a New England in Virginia. He desired it ; and I recommended to him town-meetings, training-days, town schools and ministers, giving him a short explanation of each article. The meeting-house and school-house and training-field are the scenes where New England men are formed. . . . The virtues and talents of the people are there formed ; their temperance, patience, fortitude, prudence and justice ; as well as their sagacity, knowledge, judgment, taste, skill, ingenuity, dexterity and industry.”

In saying this Mr. Adams spoke from actual observation. He, and his ancestors before him, had for a century and a half been a part of that which he described. He understood New England thoroughly. But there was one institution he did not mention in his talk with Major Langbourne, which, for good and ill, was hardly a less influential element in early New England life and action than the most potent of those which he did mention. That omitted institution was the country tavern.

Of the Braintree town-meetings and church-going little needs to be said. They were like other Massachusetts town-meetings and church-goings, and these have been frequently described. During the first twenty years after 1640 formal or stated meetings of all the freemen do not seem to have been held, or, if they were, no record of them was made ; but from time to time a few of the more prominent church members met at the dwelling-place of one of their number and passed certain votes, some of which were recorded in a

book. Not until 1673 was provision made for holding general meetings at specified seasons. For over sixty years these were then held in the old stone meeting-house, but in 1736 it was voted to hold half of them in the meeting-house of the North Precinct and the other half in that of the Middle Precinct; and a few years later, in view of the steady southward movement of the centre of population, as well as the abandonment and final removal of the old stone building, the meetings in the North Precinct were wholly discontinued. After 1748, therefore, the Middle Precinct meeting-house served not only as a town-hall, but apparently also as a magazine; for in 1746 the selectmen had been instructed by a formal vote to build a "Closite on the Beams of the Middle Precinct meeting-house (if it be allowed of) as a suitable place to keep the powder." Nor was this use of the church edifice peculiar to Quincy. On the contrary, only six years after the above vote was passed, on the 23d of April, 1752, the meeting-house of the neighboring town of Weymouth in which Parson Smith, the future father-in-law of John Adams, then ministered, by some chance caught fire. Three barrels of the town powder were at the time stored for safe and convenient keeping in the loft of the building; and these at the proper moment brought the conflagration to a crisis, making, as the minister of the church at the time duly recorded "a surprising noise when it blew up." There was nothing sacred about the early New England church building.¹ That the meeting-house and its furniture, such as it was, underwent hard treatment from numerous secular and political gatherings, scarcely needs to be said. In Braintree, not only were those gatherings frequent, but the deliberations and debates which took place at them were sometimes long and exciting, while among those assembled there was not a little disorder and drunkenness. The Middle Precinct meeting-house stood directly opposite the Eben Thayer tavern, where a sort of open house was kept on all election and other public days, and in 1766 John Adams records that a certain candidate on the ticket with himself was defeated because "the north end people, his friends, after putting in their votes the first time,

¹ See Bliss, *Colonial Times on Buzzard's Bay*, 111-16, n.

withdrew for refreshment." Accordingly, it is small matter of surprise that the record contains formal votes to the effect that "it shall be considered as a disorder and treated as such for any person who shall get on the Seats with their Feet in any part of the meeting House."

The rude and almost stern equality which, as matter of common usage, prevailed at those town-meetings was well illustrated by an incident which occurred in 1758. It was the duty of the annually elected town constable to collect all taxes. The office, therefore, was avoided; for not only did it entail much work, but, until after the year 1740, this work was wholly unremunerated. It was looked upon as a public duty to be performed by every one in turn. Nor was this all, for under the law as it then stood the constable had to account for the taxes included in the levy which he had failed to collect, as well as for those he actually received. A dangerous liability, therefore, attached to the office; and not without reason was it argued in the town-meeting of 1766 that "collecting taxes had laid the foundation for the ruin of many families." So much was the office avoided that as early as 1710, the meeting-house bell being cracked, one Daniel Legaree offered to mend it "upon condition of his being freed from being chose a Constable;" and the precinct accepted the offer, providing that "if anything should happen whereby [the bell] should be melted or broken, that [Legaree] will return the same weight of the same metal that he receives." At the March town meeting of 1761, John Adams says, "when I had no suspicion, I heard my name pronounced in a nomination of surveyors of highways. I was very wroth, because I knew no better, but said nothing. My friend Dr. Savil came to me and told me that he had nominated me to prevent me from being nominated as constable. 'For,' said the doctor, 'they make it a rule to compel every man to serve either as constable or surveyor, or to pay a fine.'" This was quite true; nor could John Adams well have failed to know it. He had probably thought that, as a college graduate and student of law, he would be exempted from the common rule. If he did think so, he should have known better. There were no exemptions allowed; and, indeed, it was one of the rough town-meeting

jokes to elect men constables who had never served, and make them pay the fine. For instance, in 1734, Josiah Quincy, then a young man of twenty-five, was elected; and the record reads, "Mr. Josiah Quincy refused to serve, and paid his fine down, being five pounds." So John Borland, belonging to one of the few wealthy families in the town, a member of the Church of England society and subsequently a Tory, was chosen constable in 1756, though then excused from serving; but in 1757 he was chosen again and appears to have served. In 1744 General Joseph Palmer, being then fifty-eight, a man of fortune and a deacon, was duly chosen constable at the annual March meeting over which he was at the time presiding as moderator. But he "refused serving as incompatible with his church office." In 1728, Moses Belcher was chosen; and he declaring non-acceptance, William Fields was next chosen. Fields also declaring his non-acceptance, "John Adams being by a majority of votes chosen, he declared his acceptance." In 1735 no less than twenty-five pounds were paid in as fines for non-acceptance, and those fines were looked upon as so considerable a source of revenue that in 1730 it was voted that the money paid in on this account should be for the benefit, not of the town as a whole, but of the particular precinct in which the person who paid it might live. Col. John Quincy's only son, Norton, graduated in 1756, and two years later, at the town-meeting of September 11th he was chosen constable. Another meeting was held, a week afterwards. Col. Quincy was then a man of nearly seventy, and for almost fifty years he had been the most prominent personage in the town. He was looked up to with that respect which, in the popular mind, always accompanies advancing years associated with high public office. The old man seems to have thought the choice of his son as town constable an act derogatory to himself; so he went into the meeting, and, as the record says, "desired his son might be excused from serving constable." Among those to whom this request was addressed there could not have been many who remembered a time when the man who made it had not, as a matter of course, presided at town meetings. They were not wanting in deference to years and standing; and, if they would defer to any one, they

would surely defer to him. But, clearly, they thought that Colonel Quincy was now demanding for himself and his an exemption from public service which amounted to little less than a denial of equality. Such an assumption of superiority was inconsistent with the spirit of town government. And so, the record proceeds, "after reasons offered," the request to be excused was "passed in the negative," and the town treasurer was directed "to call on said Norton Quincy for his fine." Apparently the old man felt this slight, as he regarded it, deeply, for his name does not again appear in the town records, though it was nine years yet before he died. But young Norton Quincy accepted the rebuke in the true spirit. He paid his fine; and the next year when the town again chose him constable, he quietly accepted the office and performed its duties. Later he was chosen selectman, serving as such for many years during the revolutionary period.

Once, when in Amsterdam, John Adams defined the New England man as a "meeting-going animal;" and again he derived his experience from Braintree, where, as he long subsequently wrote, it was notorious that he had himself "been a church-going animal for seventy-six years, from the cradle;" and his memory went back to the time when the oldest men sat on the fore-seats, for, he wrote, "I shall never forget the rows of venerable heads ranged along those front benches which, as a young fellow, I used to gaze upon." In the study of early New England life and manners there are few things more noticeable than the difference which existed between church usages and town-meeting usages. The absolute, almost rude political equality which prevailed in town-meeting, and was rigidly enforced by custom amounting to a common law, has just been illustrated in the matter of the election of constables. It is not easy to conceive of anything more democratic. On the other hand, within the walls of the meeting-house, by virtue of another common law peculiar thereto, a degree of deference now almost unknown was systematically paid, not only to age and official standing, but to social and family distinctions.¹ Harvard College, as its seal still indi-

¹ See article on Seating the Meeting-House, by G. E. Ellis, in *Unitarian Review*, January, 1877.

cates, was founded more especially to insure for Massachusetts a sufficient supply of learned and pious ministers, — it was the seminary of the established church of a Puritan commonwealth. For nearly a century and a half after the college was founded, and until 1773, the names of the undergraduates were arranged in the catalogue, not alphabetically or in recognition of proficiency as students, but according to the social standing of families. The principle which prevailed in seating the meeting-house was thus carried into the college.

When, during the early half of the eighteenth century, John Wesley felt a call to inspire the conventional Church of England with new evangelical life, in so doing he sought always to revert to the primitive customs of those assemblies seventeen hundred years before, in which "Paul the tent maker or Peter the fisherman presided," and two of his cardinal tenets related to the seating of the congregation, — the men and women were to be separated, and no one should claim any pew as his own. During the whole of the first half century of the Braintree church, this primitive custom prevailed with it. There were no pews in the original stone edifice "over the old Bridge," and the congregation sat on benches, the men on one side and the women on the other; so, when in town-meeting the vote was doubted, "the moderator, that it might be clearly decided, Divided the Polls by desiring those who were for it to go into the womens seats, and those that were against it to go into the mens seats." Naturally, with the recognized social distinctions which prevailed in those days, certain places at Sabbath meeting were by a sort of tacit, common consent conceded to particular persons, and by the year 1693 this had developed into a formal assignment of seats. The division of the floor-space into pews naturally followed; but, in the case of the first church of Braintree, this came about slowly and involved almost a history of itself, quaintly illustrative of the period.

The first move towards a formal seating of the congregation has already been alluded to. It seems to have been made in 1693; but it was not until "the first Sabbath in April (1698) that people took the places (assigned to them) as many as saw good so to do." Even then, doubtless owing

to jealousies excited by the action of the committee "chosen to seate or place persons at the meeting house," it had the year before been voted "that upon the drawing up or uniting the men's seats with the women's in the present alley, any Roome being left after alterations, any person with consent of the Selectmen may at their own proper charges mak pews for themselves and familys." At the same town-meeting it was also voted "that Mr. William Rawson should have priviledge of making a seate for his familie, between or upon the two beams over the pulpit, not darkening the pulpit." What means of access existed to this pen on the rafters nowhere appears, nor, if indeed it was ever constructed, can it now be learned whether it was reached by staircase or ladder; but three years later, in 1700, Mr. Fiske, then the pastor, was voted "liberty to Build a Pew by South East window in the meeting house He leaving convenient passage." Bit by bit the floor space of the common house of worship seems then to have been parcelled out in severalty, until in 1709 Mr. William Rawson was again provided for, this time "at the left-hand of Mr. Wilson's Pew, Mr. Wilson's and Mr. Quinsey's Pews being removed back to the wall." Even after this provision was made for them, the Rawsons evidently remained dissatisfied, and the question of assigning them pew-room was a burning one; for in November, 1710, liberty was again accorded Mr. Rawson "to build a Pew for himselve and Family where the three short seats of the womens be and so to joyn home to the foreseat of the womens in the old meeting House at the south west end." Heretofore the question of pews had been disposed of by the entire town, but this last vote, though entered in the town records, was specified as a vote of "the North Precinct Regularly assembled," and it referred to "the old Meeting house;" the new meeting-houses, and the middle and south precincts, no longer having any concern in the matter. But, though the pew question was now merely an affair of the precinct and no affair of the town, Mr. Rawson was still instant, until, in 1711, he seems to have got himself seated to his satisfaction in "a second Pew home to the wall, at the west end of the meeting house."

It was, in fact, at first much the same with the meeting-house floor as with the soil ; there was thought to be plenty for all, and possession was not greatly prized until every desirable place, whether for seeing, being seen or to listen, had become the exclusive property of some one. Permits to build pews seem consequently to have been issued almost as a matter of course, and on the most liberal terms. Captain Wilson, for instance, was allowed to construct in whatever convenient place he should elect ; and in 1712 Joseph Crosby was actually granted leave to move the East entrance some four feet to the northward, so that he might get for himself convenient space. To do this he stoned up the old doorway, tearing down sufficient wall to make a new one. But, so far, the pews were at least confined to the wall space, and the centre of the floor remained free to the great body of church-goers, who still sat in the “ mens seats ” or the “ womens seats ; ” and now these began to grow jealous, and when, in 1725, David Bass sought to be allowed to squeeze in one more pew in a small space still unoccupied near the east window, the vote passed in the negative. The galleries at first were not appropriated, except in so far as, by New England prescriptive right, they belonged to the village youth ; but this implied much. In Boston, for instance, as early as 1643, by a formal vote of the selectmen, “ Sergeant Johnson and Walter Merry are requested to take the oversight of the boyes in the galleryes,” and strict order was subsequently made for the arrest of “ any young person ” who might be “ found without either meeting-house, idling or playing during the time of publick exercise on the Lords day.” So it was also in Braintree ; there was no duty without a right, and, if duty compelled boys to go to church, rights were secured to them in the gallery while in church. But in 1720, the whole wall space on the floor of the meeting-house having been appropriated to individual use, John Saunders and Samuel Savil thought to possess themselves of a portion of the gallery ; and, in compliance with their request, the precinct voted to them “ the Two hindermost short seats in the gallery, in the south-west side of the meeting-house, extending to the Beams, for a Pew for their wives and children.” While the church-going

duty of the boys remained the same, their prescriptive gallery rights were by this vote distinctly impaired; and consequently the Saunderses and Savils in due time found their pew unmeet for occupancy, the material of which it was constructed having apparently been reduced to rubbish. At a subsequent precinct meeting the matter came up for consideration, and the question was "put by the Moderator, whether (the Saunderses and Savils) would Relinquish their Right to their Pew, which was broken, to the Precinct. They then did both thereupon Resign their Right to the Precinct." The galleries of the old stone meeting-house do not seem again to have been invaded by the pew-builder.

Though in Braintree, as elsewhere in New England, the system just described, under which the floor-space of the common place of worship was parcelled out into boxes like the proscenium of a theatre, grew out of the usage of "seating the meeting-house," yet from the beginning it seems to have been founded on a wholly different principle. Money, and not recognition, whether personal or family, was at the basis of it. The finer and more ennobling principle was then by degrees lost sight of. For instance, it has been seen that the first vote in relation to the matter passed by the Braintree church in 1697 provided that persons might "at their own proper charges" make pews for themselves and families; but when thirty-five years later Mrs. Mary Norton gave to the same church "a Velvet Cushion of Considerable Value" the parish formally invited her "to tak the upper end of the fore seet for her seet in the new Meeting-House." When the John Hancock meeting-house of 1732 was built, it was decided that it "should be accomidated with Pews as conveniently as may be;" but the great body of the floor space was still reserved for the "men's seats" and the "women's seats," and on the front benches of the first were ranged those "venerable heads" on which John Adams gazed with eyes of boyish awe; while, at "the upper end of the fore-seat" of the latter, was the place formally and by vote reserved for "Madm. Norton." The pews, little, irregular square-shaped boxes, were mainly set against the walls, and were disposed of in lots and for money to those who could or would pay most for the better

place, the prices varying from seven to twenty-five pounds, or from about \$25.00 to \$100.00 ; but it was not until after 1760 that the common public seats disappeared wholly from the body of the floor. From that time forth the control of money superseded age, and recognition of private worth or public service or family consideration, in securing precedence in the house of the Lord ; until, at length, in 1800 it is voted that "the vacancy where the old stairway was in the church, be appropriated for the use of the black people to sit in." In establishing this order of precedence and making this provision for the poor, the lowly and the despised, those composing the church could hardly have had in mind that dread day of judgment, the thought of which was so constantly with them, when, according to the scripture, the King sitting "on the throne of his glory" should thus answer their prayer : — "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." If the language of holy writ was to be accepted, through formal and recorded parish action the Master had in Quincy been relegated to "the vacancy where the old stairway was." In the primitive church of old, as in John Wesley's chapels, this thing was differently ordered ; and it is somewhat noticeable that equality in the worship of a common Creator has ever been as little observed in democratic New England as in any country classed as civilized, if, indeed, it has not been there less observed.

The "old stairway" had been in the west corner of the edifice, — the point furthest removed from the pulpit whence the Word was preached, and the vacant space created by its removal was immediately in the rear of the "men's hind seats," in which, some years before, those persons that had "Ben at Pains and expense to Gain Instruction in the use of Psalmody," had by vote been invited to "acomidate" them selves. But the choir itself was then a modern innovation, dating no further back than 1764 ; for, during a whole century and a quarter prior to that time the original congregational custom had been continued in the Braintree church, under which the psalm was slowly lined out, and then repeated by the congregation after such fashion that, in the words of

Cotton Mather, "in length of time their singing (had) degenerated into an odd noise that had more of what we want a name for than any regular singing in it." The North Precinct records show that, in 1723, "Major Quincy was fairly and clearly chosen by written votes to the office of tuning the Psalm;" while at about the same period his kinsman Judge Sewall filled the similar office at the Old South in Boston, where on one occasion, he wrote, "I intended Windsor and fell into High Dutch; and then assaying to set another Tune, went into a Key much too high. The Lord humble me and Instruct me that I should be occasion of any Interruption in the Worship of God." There is nothing in the records of the North Precinct of Braintree to indicate that Major Quincy in "tuning the Psalm" was ever the "occasion of any Interruption in the Worship of God," but there is evidence that at the time he performed this service the church of the Middle Precinct, over which the Rev. Samuel Niles then ministered, was torn by dissension through "Disorders occasioned by Regular Singing," so that Judge Sewall having, as one of a church council, attended a "publick hearing of the Matters" in the meeting-house at Braintree, was moved when he "got safe home a little after sunset" to write in his diary, — "O Lord restore Peace and Truth and Holiness to that divided Flock."

The difficulty was illustrative of the period. The Rev. Mr. Niles seems to have been an adherent of "singing by rote," while the major part of his flock were in favor of "singing by rule." As they persisted in their practice, regardless of his admonitions, he suspended several, and, at last, himself seceded from his flock, performing on Sunday, December 1st, 1723, "the Duties of the Day at his Dwelling House, among those of his Congregation who (were) opposers of Regular Singing. The Regular Singers met together at the Meeting House, and sent for Mr. Niles, who refused to come unless they would first promise not to sing Regularly; whereupon they concluded to edify themselves by the Assistance of one of the Deacons, who at their Desire prayed with them, read a sermon, &c." It was not until the following April that this breach was healed. The church council then met again,

and an accommodation was proposed, which was so far effective that the suspended brethren made some general acknowledgment, and were restored. And now Judge Sewall wrote in his diary:—“O Lord Pardon the Sin, and heal the Distemper whereby the minds of that people are alienated from each other.”

But, returning from these experiences of the Middle Precinct of Braintree to those of its North Precinct, in 1761 the church voted “to sing Dr. Watts hymns and spiritual songs on Sacramental occasions,” and three years later the choir came into recognized existence; but not until 1804 was it voted “to procure a bass viol for the use of the congregation,” while about the year 1812 we are told there was in the choir “Hezekiah Bass with his large bass-viol, John Pray with his fiddle (and) Capt. Josiah Bass with his noble voice to lead the singing.”

Here and there entries are to be found in the records indicating a condition of affairs which, in view of the inclemency of the New England climate, is not easy to understand. The meeting-house would for a long period have seemed to be not only out of repair, but, both Sundays and week-days, actually open both to animals and the elements. For instance, in 1695 a committee was appointed “to stop the leaks in the south side of the meeting-house,” and in 1730 the Precinct clerk, Joseph Parmenter, was paid twenty shillings,—a large sum at that time, and equivalent to pay for the labor of one man during ten days,—for his services as clerk, and for “clearing the meeting-house of snow the year past, there having been cart-loads of snow blown in by a terrible storm;” and, at a meeting held on the 22d of the previous December, the Precinct “having Debated upon the Disturbance made by Dogs in the meeting-house on Sabbath Days, to Prevent the same, they then voted that Joseph Parmenter should have twenty shillings, provided he would take care and pains in that matter, by beating and keeping of them out, until the Precinct meet next March.” This provision, it will be noticed, was made for the winter months, and it was in strict accordance with a vote of the whole town passed in April fifteen years before, instructing the selectmen to “draw up a by-law for

the prevention of Dogs coming into the Meeting-houses, in the time of Publick worship." But, from the other provisions of this vote, directing that a "meet" penalty should be imposed "on the owners thereof," it would seem probable that the "dogs," following the vehicles of their owners to the meeting-house, found their way into it among the entering members of the congregation; and coming in contact with each other as they smelt their way down the benches, an occasional dog-fight would, as a natural consequence, lead, in the language of Judge Sewall, to an "Interruption in the Worship of God;" an interruption doubtless of deep and abiding interest to the nascent manhood of the gallery, but the reverse of edifying to those spiritually minded.¹

¹ In the Johns Hopkins University Studies (I. iv.) there is a curious and interesting paper by Herbert B. Adams on Saxon Tithing Men in America. In the course of it Mr. Adams says, — "But more usually one tithing-man sat at each door of the meeting-house to keep out dogs, and one often sat in the gallery to keep in boys;" and he adds in a note, — "The 'Dog Whipper' was a regular institution in certain old English towns, notably in Exeter and Congleton (in Chester). Mr. Edward A. Freeman has called our attention to a curious law of Edgar (see Thorpe's *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, ii. 251), whereby parish priests were to see to it that no dog should enter church, nor yet more a swine, if it could possibly be prevented!"

In his *Colonial Times on Buzzard's Bay*, Mr. Bliss enumerates "the appointment of dog-whippers to beat out dogs in meeting time" among the New England town customs which "were an inheritance from the parishes of Old England" (p. 103). And Mr. Richard Grant White in his edition of *Shakespeare* (vii. 426) quotes the following from Greene's *A Looking Glass for London and England*:—"A gentleman! good sir, I remember you well, and all your progenitors; your father bore office in our town; an honest man he was, and in great discredit in the parish, for they bestowed two squires' livings on him, the one was on working days, and then he kept the town cage, and on holidays they made him the sexton's man, for he whipped dogs out of the church."

In the Dedham town records (v. 13) is the following entry under date of "12-11-1673:"—"Agreed with Nat Heaton to whip doges out of the Meeting House, and to goe upon errands for the reverend elders, referring to the church: and to take care of cushin and glass, till further order be taken and for his paynes herein he is to receive of the Towne ten shillings for an whole year."

Dr. Paige in his *History of Cambridge* (p. 130) says:—"On the 12th of May, 1729, it was 'Voted, that so often as any dog or dogs is or are seen

In other and more conventional matters pertaining to church-going, the people of Braintree differed, probably, in nowise from the people of other New England country towns; and of New England church-going sufficient has been written and said.¹ For generations all those dwelling in the town, of both sexes and of every age, — on foot, in carriage, wagon or chair, or on horseback, — as regularly as the Sabbath dawned, gathered towards the plain, wooden structure, standing on the training-ground. While the services were conducted within, the horses stood patiently without in the neighboring meeting-house sheds or, in summer, hitched to the fence-posts; and, in Quincy, until the year 1827, the old horse-block, for the convenience of the pillion-riding good-wife, stood close to the main entrance. In the galleries sat the boys, under the vigilant eye of the tithing-man, though in the earlier days of the old stone church it had once been voted “that the uppermost westerley gallery be from henceforward a seat for womenkind.” Before the pulpit were the deacons. And here doubtless in the early days not unfrequently in midwinter was it so cold that “the Sacramental Bread was frozen pretty hard, and rattled sadly as broken into the plates.”

A glimpse of the interior of the church on a Sunday is obtained through the memoirs of the wife of President Josiah Quincy. She came to Quincy as a summer home in 1798, living in the house which Col. Josiah Quincy had built in 1770, and which still stands at the end of the long avenue of elms which her husband set out in 1790. She was wont to describe the Quincy of 1800 as being still a retired village, in which few changes had taken place since the Revolution.

“There were only two churches, both ancient wooden edifices — the Episcopal and the Congregational. The pews in the centre of the latter, having been made out of long, open seats by successive votes of the town, were of different sizes, and had no regularity of arrangement, and several

in the meeting-house on the Lord’s day in the time of public worship, the owner or owners of the said dog or dogs shall for every such offence pay one shilling, half to go to the officer appointed to regulate said dogs, the other half part of said fine to be for the use of the poor of the town.’”

¹ See Mr. Young’s description in the volume of *Commemorative Services of the First Parish in Hingham*, August 8, 1881.

were entered by narrow passages, winding between those in their neighborhood. The seats, being provided with hinges, were raised when the congregation stood during the prayer, and, at its conclusion, thrown down with a momentum which, on her first attendance, alarmed Mrs. Quincy, who feared the church was falling. The deacons were ranged under the pulpit, and beside its door the sexton was seated, while, from an aperture aloft in the wall, the bell-ringer looked in from the tower to mark the arrival of the clergyman. The voices of the choir in the front gallery were assisted by a discordant assemblage of stringed and wind instruments. In 1806, when the increased population of the town required a larger edifice, the meeting-house was divided into two parts ; the pulpit, and the pews in its vicinity, were moved to a convenient distance, and a new piece was inserted between the fragments."

CHAPTER X.

THE CHURCH, AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

IT remains to speak of the church as an educational, directing and restraining force during the colonial period, and of what is known as church discipline. As will presently be seen, in Braintree as in the other Massachusetts towns, until the year 1693 the church was supreme both politically and spiritually. Church members only were freemen, and the officials of the church were the officials of the town. Nor was this arrangement otherwise than natural, for the meeting-house was the town-building, the entire tax levy was for church purposes, the minister was the central figure in the community. After 1693 the political machinery as distinguished from the religious organization began to take shape, and in 1708 the process of development in Braintree was greatly stimulated by the establishment of a second precinct, — the separation of church and state to a certain extent then took place. This separation lasted until 1792, when, on the incorporation of Quincy as a distinct municipality, church and town were again merged, and they remained merged until April 12, 1824. On that day the parish was finally, under the laws enacted in pursuance of the provisions of the amended constitution of 1820, separated from the town, and became merely the Congregational Society of Quincy. Two generations of men have since then passed away, and the church as it existed prior to 1824 has ceased to be more than a tradition; and even as a tradition it has become vague. Yet the church of 1824 was in its influence and power the mere shadow of the church of the earlier day; and while, during the sixty years of town life between 1640 and 1700, the church organization was in Braintree all in all to its people, yet probably it was during the first half of the eighteenth century that what was known as the discipline of the church

made itself most distinctly felt ; in any event the record of the larger portion of the earlier period, so far as Braintree is concerned, long since disappeared, and its traditions even have faded wholly away.

Six names, besides those of the pastor and teacher, were appended to the original Braintree church covenant of September 16, 1639, and, during the ministry of Mr. Flynt, extending over twenty-nine years, the church contained two hundred and four adult members. During the Fiske, Marsh and Hancock pastorates, down to the close of the first century of church life in 1739, this number was increased to five hundred and fifty-eight, and on the 16th of September of that year the pastor made a note of the fact that the church, "both males and females, solemnly renewed the Covenant of their Fathers, immediately before the participation of the Lord's Supper,"—that covenant under which "poor unworthy creatures, who have sometimes lived without Christ and without God in the world, . . . by the help and strength of Christ renounce the devil, the wicked world, a sinful flesh, with all the covenants of Anti-Christian pollution wherein sometimes we have walked, and all our former evil ways, . . . and we give up ourselves also one to another by the will of God, . . . and we also manifest our joint consent herein this day in presence of this assembly, by this our present public profession, and by giving to one another the right hand of fellowship."

During these hundred years which ended on the 16th of September, 1739, it is not too much to say that the church was the life centre of Braintree. Nor, when its second century began, had that life centre as yet begun to lose its vitality ; on the contrary it then glowed with a brighter, a more feverish heat than ever before, — a heat which preceded the gradual waning of the old theological fire about to begin. It was the period of religious revivals, — the "Great Awakening," as it was called, in New England. Already, four years before, in 1735, the famous Northampton revival had taken place, when, in the words of Jonathan Edwards, who engineered and presided over it, "the noise among the Dry Bones waxed louder and louder," and "Souls did as it were come by

Flocks to Jesus Christ." Two years later, in 1741, George Whitefield preached on Boston Common to an audience of "about fifteen thousand," computed as not far from three quarters of the whole population of the town. In May, 1744, Mr. Hancock died, and with him ceased the records of Braintree church discipline; for, whether from indolence or because they saw no advantage in so doing, the ministers who succeeded Mr. Hancock made no mention of anything pertaining to the church's life or action beyond what was contained in the book regularly kept by the precinct clerk. But, among the still remaining archives of the parish, there is one small volume both curious and valuable. Bound in smooth dark leather, the paper of which this volume is made is of that rough parchment character in such common use during the last century, and the entries in it, in the handwritings of five different pastors, while deciphered only with the utmost difficulty, throw a vivid gleam of light on social habits and methods of existence which long since wholly disappeared. Beginning in 1673, these entries end in 1741, and the material out of which any direct knowledge can now be derived of Braintree church life during the colonial period is confined to those sixty-eight years.

During those years, as during the years which preceded and followed, but of which no record remains, the church of Braintree, like the churches of other New England communities, was a social centre as well as a religious organization. The life of the town radiated from it. The people dwelt on farms, at some distance from each other in most cases, and usually at considerable distance from the meeting-house. Local and parental authority, church discipline, public opinion, enforced church attendance. Fashion, habit, choice, the love of company, the desire to see people and hear the news, all concurred in bringing every one to meeting. To many it was sometimes impossible and often inconvenient to return home between services. The result was that the inhabitants of the town, old and young, male and female, were every week thrown and kept together for several hours, during which they could not avoid that social intercourse which they naturally craved. Church attendance was thus a more effective,

educational and controlling influence than town-meeting; for not only did it occur far more frequently, but it included all ages of both sexes. On pleasant Sabbaths, especially in the spring and autumn, neighbors and acquaintances would gather together in knots, and the young would stroll off among the trees or along the brook-side. In bad weather or in winter they would remain in the meeting-house, or find shelter and warmth in the dwellings nearest to it. John Adams had reason, therefore, for defining the colonial New Englander as "a meeting-going animal," for the meeting-going habit produced results upon the character of that people than which none were more marked. In the absence of newspapers and of travel, the Sabbath was the day for hearing and telling the news, and the meeting-house became a sort of central bazaar where local gossip could be interchanged. The church thus became a club, as the door of the meeting-house served as a bulletin board.¹ It was a club, too, from which exclusion placed an inhabitant of the town under a ban and made of him a pariah.

To be a "child of the covenant," as the expression runs in the records, was to be born of those who were members of the church, and the pastor would not baptize a child unless one of its parents had entered into the covenant; nor would he always baptize it even then.² The method pursued in admitting a new member to church fellowship was well established. The pastor was what the name implied, — the shepherd of the flock. As such it was his duty to keep a faithful oversight of it, which extended as well to those who were merely attendants at meeting as to those who partook of the sacrament. This oversight was inquisitive, — pastoral. It extended to the home and included the Catechism. Such as, not yet in the covenant, gave evidence "in a godly walk" of being under religious influence, or hopefully pious, were those

¹ See on this subject Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, i. 207-8; and Bliss, *Colonial Times on Buzzard's Bay*, 121. While I am most indebted to the first, the description contained in the last is the more life-like and entertaining.

² Church Discipline in New England, *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Series II. vi. 493-4.

for whom pastor and deacon, brother and sister, were most concerned; but all candidates for admission to the church were to offer themselves individually and under conviction, and this conviction was to be avowed. A conference with an officer of the church then followed, and if this was satisfactory the candidate was "propounded" before the whole congregation for admission into the select body those composing which were in covenant, — the Church. This was a trying ordeal, for, though objection was rarely made, any member of the community was free to rise up and demur, and in so doing he might ask questions of a most embarrassing character relating to all sorts of incidents in the past life of the candidate. The records of the older churches of Massachusetts contain many individual experiences "the rehearsal of which is not now viewed as edifying." After a suitable time from the "propounding" had elapsed, — a fortnight or a month, — the candidates, rising from their seats at the call of the pastor, in full congregation and at a recognized point in the Sabbath services, gave an oral or written relation of their individual religious experience.¹ A survival of the confessional, but now made in public, this relation of experiences, while eagerly entered upon by some, could not but have been most trying to many. Man or boy, girl or matron, the persons seeking admission stood with the eyes of all directed towards them, and were expected to reveal in public those things which in the original church were whispered in the ear of the hidden confessor.

The practice, of course, degenerated in time into a mere form, but it must always have remained a severe ordeal for the timid, and yet more so for the conscientious. Nor were the confessions, especially those of a certain class in which women were involved and concealment was impossible, of an improving character. So in 1722 "some persons of a sober life and good conversation," dwelling in the North Precinct of Braintree, signified their unwillingness to join the church unless they might be admitted "without making a Public Relation of their spiritual experiences, which (they said) the church had no warrant in the word of God to require." It

¹ Ellis, *The Puritan Age in Massachusetts*, 206-8.

was therefore proposed that the church should no longer require a relation from "any person who desires to partake in the ordinance of the Lord's supper with us; and after the case had been under debate at times among the brethren privately for the space of three weeks, the question was put to them January 28th, being on a Lord's Day Evening, in the meeting-house;" and "it passed in the negative by a large majority."

But this action was confined to the relation of the individual experiences of those seeking admission into the church. The confessions of shortcomings on the part of church members were still made, and discipline was enforced after 1722 as apparently it had been from the beginning. Some of these cases, as they stand recorded,¹ are interesting as well as curious, revealing quaint touches of human nature. One of them, the first of its kind, in the handwriting of the Rev. Mr. Fiske, bears date of March 2, 1683. Temperance, the wife of one John Bondish, had fallen into error and her offence was manifest:—

[She was accordingly] "called forth in the open Congregation, and presented a paper containing a full acknowledgment of her great sin and wickedness, [in which she] publicly bewayled her disobedience to parents, pride, unprofitableness under the means of grace, as the cause that might provoke God to punish her with sin, and warning all to take heed of such sins, begging the church's prayers, that God would humble her, and give a sound repentance, etc. Which confession being read, after some debate, the brethren did generally if not unanimously judge that she ought to be admonished; and accordingly she was solemnly admonished of her great sin, which was spread before her in divers particulars, and charged to search her own heart wayes and to make thorough work in her Repentance, etc., from which she was released by the church vote unanimously."

The case of Samuel Tompson was of a different character from that of Temperance Bondish. This individual, though he bore the same surname, does not seem to have been related to the first clergyman of the town. Apparently he was the son of Deacon Samuel Tompson, who, born in 1630, was promoted to a seat on the bench in front of the pulpit in 1679, while his name appears on almost every page of the

¹ *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Series II. vi. 480-90.

earlier records of the town. Though the son of one of the deacons of the church, Samuel Tompson, Jr., was, as elsewhere appears in this narrative, a man constitutionally otherwise minded, and he saw fit not only to nourish but openly to proclaim a bitter personal animosity to his minister. He was accordingly subjected to discipline in the manner following: —

“Samuel Tompson, a prodigie of pride, malice and arrogance, being called before the church in the Meeting-house for his absenting himselfe from the Publike Worshipe, unlesse when any strangers preached; his carriage being before the Church proud and insolent, reviling and vilifying their Pastor, at an horrible rate, and stileing him their priest, and them a nest of wasps; and they unanimously voted an admonition, which was accordingly solemnly and in the name of Christ applied to him, wherein his sin and wickedness was laid open by divers Scriptures for his conviction, and was warned to repent, and after prayer to God this poor man goes to the tavern to drink it down immediately, as he said, &c.”

Then, under date of 27th August, 1697, a month later, Mr. Fiske proceeds: —

“He delivered to me an acknowledgment in a bit of paper at my house in the presence of Leift. Marsh and Ensign Penniman, who he brought. 'T was read before the Church at a meeting appointed 12.8. They being not willing to meet before. Leift. Col. Quincy gave his testimony against it, and said that his conversation did not agree therewith.”

The next entry, also in the same handwriting, is dated 25th December, 1697: —

“At the church Meeting further testimony came in against him: the church generally by vote and voice declared him impenitent, and I was to proceed to an ejection of him, by a silent vote in Public. But I deferred it, partly because of the severity of the winter, but chiefly because his pretended offence was chiefly against myself, and [he] had said I would take all advantages against him, I deferred the same, and because 4 or 5 of the brethren did desire that he might be called before the church to see if he would own what they asserted: and having [notified] the church, he came, brought an additional acknowledgment. Of 15 about 9 or 10 voted to accept of it, &c.”

This occurred on the 11th of April, 1698; and on the 17th, Mr. Fiske proceeds, —

“After the end of the public worship his confession was read publicly, and the major part of the Church voted his absolution.”

Samuel Tompson, Jr., seems thus through a divided vote of the church members to have escaped excommunication, and it

exemplifies the power of the organization that a man of this character, a frequenter of the tavern and a chronic dissenter in town-meeting, did not dare set the church at defiance and ignore its action. He publicly confessed. Joseph Belcher was less fortunate. His case came before the church in October and November, 1677 : —

“ Joseph Belcher, a member of this Church though not in full communion, being sent for by the Church, after they had resolved to inquire into the matter of scandal, so notoriously infamous both in Court and Country, by Deacon Basse and Samuel Tompson, to give an account of those things; they returning with this answer from him, — that he would consider of it and send the Church word, the next Sabbath, whether he would come or no ; on which return by a Script, whereunto his name was subscribed, which he also owned to the elder, in private the weeke after, wherein he scornfully and impudently reflected upon the officer and church, and rudely refused to have anything to doe with us. [So], after considerable waiting, he persisting in his impenitence and obstinacy, (the Elders met at Boston unanimously advising thereto) the Church voted his not hearing of them, some few brethren not acting, doubting of his membership but silent. He was proceeded against according to Matthew 18, 17,¹ and rejected.”

The case of Isaac Theer, a child of the covenant and a member of the church, but not in full communion, came up shortly after that of Mrs. Temperance Bondish was disposed of. He it seems had been convicted of “notorious scandalous thefts multiplied,” for some of which he “suffered the law.” Not content with this, he was now proceeded against in a church way, and the brethren labored with him in private “to bring him to a thorough sight and free and ingenuous confession of his sin ; as also for his abominably lying, changing his name, &c.” Then comes in the language of the record a scene vividly illustrative of the olden time. As the words are read the simple village meeting-house, crowded on that May afternoon with plainly dressed, hard-featured, Massachusetts men and women, comes back out of the past. In the pulpit is Parson Fiske ; before it on their bench sit the gray-haired deacons ; on the right of the minister are the men, on the left are the women ; the boys look down with eager interest from the gal-

¹ “ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

lery. Then presently, after the services are ended, Isaac Theer

“was called forth in public, moved pathetically to acknowledge his sin, and publish his repentance, who came down and stood against the lower end of the fore-seat after he had been prevented (by our shutting the east door) from going out; stood impudently, and said indeed he owned his sin of stealing, was heartily sorry for it, begged pardon of God and men, and hoped he should do so no more, which was all he could be brought unto, saying his sin was already known, and that there was no need to mention it in particular, all with a remisse voice so that but few could hear him. The Church at length gave their judgement against him, that he was a notorious, scandalous sinner, and obstinately impenitent. And when I was proceeding to spread before him his sin and wickedness, he (as 't is probable) guessing what was like to follow, turned about to goe out, and being desired and charged to tarry and hear what the church had to say to him, he flung out of doors, with an insolent manner, though silent. Therefore the Pastor applied himself to the congregation, and having spread before them his sin, partly to vindicate the church's proceeding against him, and partly to warn others; sentence was declared against him.”

In 1690 Ebenezer Owen, the son of parents who had long been in full communion, had gone as one of the thirteen men impressed from Braintree as the town's quota in the Quebec expedition of that year. The small-pox broke out and Owen died of it, being one of four from Braintree thrown overboard off Cape Ann. He left a widow and a brother Josiah, who, to the great scandal of the church, he being “a child of the covenant,” “obtained by fraud and wicked contrivance some marriage” with her. The two were living together when they were visited “at his cottage by the Pastor of the Church with Major Quinsey and D. Tompson,” who informed them of the “appointment of an open confession of their sin in the congregation.” Josiah Owen, the record goes on to say, was “affectionately treated” by the church emissaries, and

“after much discourse finding him obstinate and reflecting, he was desired and charged to be present the next Sabbath before the Church, to hear what should be spoken to him, but he boldly replied he should not come. And being after treated by D. Tompson and his father to come, and taking his opportunity to carry her away the last week, after a solemn sermon preached on I Cor. 5. 3, 4 and 5,¹ and prayers added, an account was

¹ 3. “For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged

given to the church and congregation of him, the Brethren voting him to be an impenitent, scandalous, wicked, incestuous sinner, and giving their consent that the sentence of excommunication should be passed upon and declared against him, which was solemnly performed by the Pastor of the Church according to the direction of the Apostle in the above mentioned text: this 17 of January 1691/2."

And so Josiah Owen and the widow of his brother Ebenezer, who was "thrown overboard at Cap an," rise up distinctly enough for an instant out of the Braintree church records of two centuries ago, and then flit back into oblivion in company with Parson Fiske, "Major Quinsey," Governor Phipps and the Quebec expedition of 1690.

A few years later James Penniman causes much trouble. A member of the church though not in full communion, he was a man of "notoriously scandalous life," noted for his "unchristian carriage towards his wife, and frequent excessive drinking." When called before the congregation and allowed to speak in his own vindication, "he behaved himself very insolently, and was far from discovering any signs of true repentance." Unanimously voted guilty, he was laid under solemn admonition. This was in 1713; but, as the years went on, James Penniman did not walk more correctly, so in April, 1722, it was proposed to excommunicate him. This seems to have thoroughly frightened the worthless fellow, and the record goes on:—

"Sabbath day, April 4, 1722. This day he presented a confession which was read before the Congregation, and prayed that they would wait upon him a while longer, which the Church consented to, and he was again publicly admonished and warned against persisting in the neglect of Public Worship, against Idleness, Drunkenness and Lying; and he gave some slender hopes of Reformation, seemed to be considerably affected, and behaved himself tolerably well."

"May 26, 1723. The brethren of the Church met together to consider what is further necessary to be done by the Church towards the reformation of James Penniman. He being present desired their patience to-

already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

4. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

wards him, and offered a trifling confession, which was read, but not accepted by the brethren, because he manifested no sign of true repentance thereof: they came to (I think) a unanimous vote that he should be cast out of the Church for his incorrigibleness in his evil waies, whenever I shall see good to do it, and I promised to wait upon him some time, to see how he would behave himself before I proceeded against him.

“January 26, 1723/4, Lord’s-day. In the afternoon, after a sermon on I Cor. v. 5,¹ James Penniman persisting in a course of Idleness, Drunkenness, and in a neglect of the Public Worship, &c., had the fearful sentence of excommunication pronounced upon him.”

In 1723 Joseph Parmenter was the town clerk, and as such the town voted him the sum of twenty shillings’ worth about \$1.25 in silver, for his services as such during the year. Possibly there may have been two Joseph Parmenters in Braintree at that time, as a little earlier there were certainly two Samuel Tompsons, but the record says that on the 9th of September, 1622, “Brother Joseph Parmenter made a public Confession, in the presence of the Congregation, for the sin of drunkenness,” and at a church meeting held twelve days later to consider his case,

“the question was put whether they would accept his confession to restore him; it passed in the negative, because he has made several confessions of the sin, and is still unreformed thereof: the Brethren concluded it proper to suspend him from communion in the Lord’s Supper, for his further humiliation and warning. He was accordingly suspended.

“March 3d, 1723. Sabbath Evening. Brother Parmenter having behaved himself well (for aught any that appears) since his suspension, was at his desire restored again by a vote of the brethren, *nemine contradicente*.”

It will be noticed that the action last recorded took place on the 3d of March, 1723. The next day the annual town-meeting was held, at which “the inhabitants of Braintree being Lawfully Assembled then chose John Quincey Esq. moderator for that day. They then chose Joseph Parmenter clerk for the year ensuing by lifting up their hands.”

A single further case of ecclesiastical discipline will suffice to illustrate this side of colonial life. It occurred in 1735 and the Owen family was again involved. All that is known of the case is contained in the precinct record, but the several en-

¹ 5. To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

tries illustrate well the direct manner in which the church then intervened in matters which would now be sharply pronounced none of its concern : —

“September 8, 1735. At a Meeting of the First Church of Christ in Braintree at the house of the Pastor, September the 8th 1735, after prayer — Voted, That it is the duty of this Church to examine the proofs of an unhappy quarrel between Benjamin Owen and Joseph Owen, members in full communion with this Church on May 30th 1735, whereby God has been dishonored and religion reproached.

“After some examination thereof it was unanimously voted by the brethren — That the Pastor should ask Benjamin Owen whether he would make satisfaction to the church for his late offensive behaviour, which he refused to do in a public manner, unless the charge could be more fully proved upon him. Whereupon there arose several debates upon the sufficiency of the proof to demand a publick confession of him ; and there appearing different apprehensions among the brethren about it, it was moved by several that the meeting should be adjourned for further consideration of the whole affair.

“29th Inst., at 2 o'clock, P. M.

“The brethren met upon the adjournment, and after humble supplication to God for direction, examined more fully the proofs of the late quarrel between Benj. Owen and Joseph Owen but passed no vote upon them.

“October 22, 1735. At a meeting of the 1st Church in Braintree at the house of the Pastor, after prayer, Benj. Owen offered to the brethren a confession of his late offensive behavior which was not accepted.

“Then it was voted by the brethren that he should make confession of his offence in the following words, viz : ‘Whereas I have been left to fall into a sinful strife and quarrel with my brother Joseph Owen, I acknowledge I am greatly to blame, that I met my brother in anger and strove with him, to the dishonor of God, and thereby also have offended my Christian brethren. I desire to be humbled before God, and to ask God’s forgiveness : I desire to be at peace with my brother, and to be restored to the charity of this Church, and your prayers to God for me.’

“To which he consented, as also to make it in public.

“At the desire of the brethren the meeting was adjourned to Friday the 24th Inst. at 4 o'clock, P. M., that they might satisfy themselves concerning the conduct of Joseph Owen in the late sinful strife between him and his brother. And the Pastor was desired to send to him to be present at the adjournment.

“The brethren met accordingly, and after a long consideration of the proof had against Joseph Owen, it was proposed to the brethren whether they would defer the further consideration of Joseph Owen’s affair to another opportunity. It was voted in the negative.

“Whereupon a vote was proposed in the following words viz : Whether it appears to the brethren of this Church that the proofs they have had

against Joseph Owen in the late unhappy strife between him and his brother be sufficient for them to demand satisfaction from him. Voted in the affirmative.

"And the satisfaction the brethren voted he should make for his offence was in the following words:—I am sensible that in the late unhappy and sinful strife between me and my brother Benj. Owen I am blameworthy, and I ask forgiveness of God and this Church, and I desire to be at peace with my brother and ask your prayers to God for me.

"Then it was proposed to the brethren whether they would accept this confession, if Joseph Owen would make it before them at the present meeting. Voted in the negative.

"Whereupon it was voted that he should make this satisfaction for his offence before the Church upon the Lords day immediately before the administration of the Lord's supper. With which he refusing to comply [with], though he consented to make it before the Church at the present meeting, the meeting was dissolved.

"October 26, 1735. Benj'n Owen made a public confession of his offence, and was restored to the charity of the Church.

"November 10, 1735. At a church meeting, . . . "upon a motion made by some of the brethren to reconsider the vote of the Church October 24, relating to Joseph Owen, it was voted to reconsider the same. Voted also that his confession be accepted before the brethren at the present meeting, which was accordingly done, and he was restored to their charity."

The last public confession recorded as made before the North Precinct church was on the 20th of January, 1740; and the last recorded case of discipline, except that of Ebenezer Adams already referred to,¹ was on the 25th of October, 1741, when Eleazer Veazie was suspended by formal vote from the communion "for his disorderly unchristian life and neglecting to hear the Church."

The facts which have been stated and the examples given suffice to illustrate the power of church discipline in the colonial period, and the way it was made to enter into the everyday life of that people. It was a direct inheritance from the original church and the mother country, for Pepys notes down in his diary for a Sunday in 1665 how he went by coach "to church four miles off, where a pretty good sermon and a declaration of penitence of a man that had undergone the church's censure for his wicked life."² The practice was continued much longer in other parts of Massachusetts, but it

¹ *Supra*, 52-3.

² Bliss, *Colonial Times on Buzzard's Bay*, 142, 155.

wholly died out in Braintree under the easy-going pastorate of the Rev. Anthony Wibird before the revolutionary troubles began. Just in the degree the political machinery assumed new and larger functions, the ecclesiastical machinery fell into disuse. So far as Braintree was concerned, the change was clearly defined, and it took place in 1744, at the close of the Hancock pastorate. Before that, the church was greater than the town-meeting; after that, church discipline ceased to make itself felt, and the fervor of religious feeling cooled rapidly under the reaction which followed "the Great Awakening."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAINING-FIELD AND THE SCHOOL-HOUSE.

IN mentioning the muster-field among the great formative influences of New England, it may well be questioned whether John Adams did not give to that field an undue importance. Certainly there are in the Braintree records few traces of it as an active educational force. Whatever else they were, the New Englanders were not a military race. On the ocean they were at home, and the hardy mariners who, as Burke expressed it, pursued their gigantic game "among the tumbling mountains of ice," and "drew the line and struck the harpoon on the coast of Africa," — these same men, skilful, alert and venturesome upon their element, have never failed to assert a brilliant supremacy in maritime warfare. But, though repeatedly in the course of its history engaged in conflicts the brunt of which was sturdily assumed, New England proper has never yet produced any considerable military genius. Church and Peperill, Putnam, Allen, Knox, Stark and Lincoln are names of only local note; while during the war of the Rebellion the great leaders from the New England stock were born and bred far in the interior of the continent. Not one New England soldier achieved renown.

As a people the New Englanders do not take kindly to camp life. When forced to it, they have always fought in a dogged, intelligent sort of way, just as they fought at Lexington and Bunker's Hill; impelled, as it were, by a consciousness that the situation was one of their own making, and they proposed to see the thing through. But to disband a New England army has never proved a difficult or delicate task; for, once the work in hand is done, the camp quietly and joyously dissolves of itself. An army of Yankee mercenaries sounds like a contradiction in terms. Accordingly, though the Suffolk regiment

existed as a military organization through a century of colonial life, and the Braintree companies were always, a part of it, there is no reason to suppose that it was ever an effective force. Commissions in it were eagerly sought, and were intrigued for, and the titles of captain, lieutenant and ensign are continually met with in the records; but, except in time of military excitement, the training-days were few and far apart, and partook apparently more of the character of a rough country jollification than of war. Certainly, when Washington took command of the provincial army at Cambridge, neither its discipline nor its equipment bespoke a martial race. It was little more than a mob of intelligent men, organized by localities, and, as sportsmen, accustomed from youth to the handling of guns.

The first commander of the Braintree company was Capt. Robert Keayne, whose name is more familiarly connected with a great litigation carried on between him and "one Sherman's wife," springing out of a quarrel over "a stray sow," which was brought to Keayne in 1636, and which he had "cried divers times, and divers came to see it, but none made claim to it." Mrs. Sherman then appeared on the scene, and the quarrel ensued which by degrees enlisted the sympathies of the whole community on the one side or the other, resulting finally in the separation of the Massachusetts legislature into two bodies, and the introduction of the Senate as a feature in American polity. Capt. Keayne was presently succeeded in the command of the Braintree company by William Tyng, the Boston merchant who bought Mount Wollaston of Coddington. Capt. Tyng represented Braintree in the General Court, and died in 1653 the richest man in the province. To him succeeded Capt. Richard Brackett, who was deacon and town clerk as well, holding his military commission until he reached the ripe age of seventy-three. He resigned in 1684; and to trace his successors thereafter is matter of hardly local interest, even though shortly after 1700 the town had so increased that it had two companies, one containing seventy-two families and the other seventy-one, "both enumerated by exact computation."

The training-field may have been overestimated as a factor

in the making of New England, but to overestimate the influence of the school in that making would be difficult. It stands next below the church in the earlier period, and above it in the more recent. Prior to 1830 it was below it. There are entries in the Braintree records which indicate that a public Latin school was established in the town at a very early period, in the neighborhood, indeed, of 1645, though the exact date cannot now be fixed; yet in 1735 the records refer to "a Free Latin School" which had then been kept by the town "for about ninety years," and in 1645 Winthrop made note of the fact that "divers free Schools were erected, as at Roxbury, . . . the charge to be by yearly contribution, either by voluntary allowance, or by rate of such as refused, &c., and . . . other towns did the like, providing maintenance by several means." In 1719 Roxbury and Braintree were classed together among the towns of Suffolk county as "noted for their Free-Schools,"¹ and Braintree may, therefore, have been one of the "other towns" referred to by Winthrop, though it is certain that even two years later, in 1647, to use the language of the famous colonial law of that year, the Lord had not increased the inhabitants of the town "to the number of one hundred families," necessitating the setting up of "a grammar school, the master thereof to be able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the University, . . . to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers." Indeed, it may well be doubted whether at that time Braintree yet numbered even those "fifty households" prescribed by the same law as the point at which every township should designate some one "to teach all children to read and write." None the less, the town records indicate that even then, with a population of scarcely three hundred souls, Braintree did maintain within its limits some sort of a school in which youths were prepared for college when those might be admitted who were "able to read Tully, or such like classical author, extempore, . . . and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbs in the Greek tongue;" but at this point the record stops, throwing no light on the source from whence "the maintenance" of this institution was derived.

¹ Neal, *Hist. of New England*, ii. 229.

Very possibly, for there is no trace of "yearly contribution either by voluntary allowance or by rate." The "Free Latin School" was in that earliest formative period merely Teacher Flynt's side of his wife Margery's institution, already referred to, for "instructing young gentlewomen;" and, for keeping it, the teacher was allowed by "those that ordered the prudentials of the town" the enjoyment or usufruct of that "School land" which in 1640 was "recovered of Mr. Coddington." A century later an annual rent of £142 was derived from these lands, and it was then stated¹ that from them the town had "reaped great benefit in good schools for many years past." If at an earlier period the rent of the Coddington land was indeed applied to the support of a school kept by Teacher Flynt, in that school the teacher fitted for college not only his own son, Henry, but also Benjamin Tompson, the son of the first minister of the church, who a little later on became the first regular schoolmaster of the town. It is a fact worthy of notice, also, that during the first century of the town's history, which was also the distinctly formative provincial period, extending from about the time of Winthrop's death (1649) nearly to the beginning of the final French wars (1744),—during this century no less than forty-nine young men, prepared either at the "Free Latin School" or elsewhere, are said to have entered college from Braintree, forty-seven of whom were from the North Precinct church. Considering the extreme poverty of the period, and the fact that even at its close the town scarcely numbered a population of 1,500 souls, having begun with about 200, such a record of those seeking a university education is significant. In those early days also, in proportion to her means, Braintree was more than a liberal, she was a munificent benefactor of the college; for when, in 1669, the condition of the seminary was critical and apparently hopeless,—when its buildings were pronounced "ruinous and almost irreparable," and it was declared that without a new building its situation was desperate,—in this great emergency Braintree was one of the towns which responded most liberally to "the loud groans of the sinking College," contributing to "erecting a new College" the sum

¹ Hancock, *Century Sermons*, 22, n.

of £87 14s. 6d.¹ an amount than which four places only in the province gave more. Nor is it easy now to understand what could have induced the inhabitants of a town the size Braintree then was to make so large a gift, or how they could have afforded to do so. In proportion to population, supposing the wealth per capita of the community to have been as large then as it is now, such a contribution was the equivalent of \$9,000 from the Quincy of to-day; but in reality it is not unsafe to say that in proportion to accumulated wealth the gift of \$90,000 would mean less to those now inhabiting the four towns into which the Braintree of 1669 has been divided than the poor \$292.43 meant then. That people gave of their little.²

The earliest village school-house in Braintree, which must have been a structure of the humblest description, stood at the side of the Plymouth highway, or main thoroughfare of the settlement, and not far from the meeting-house. When it was built nowhere appears, but in 1679 it was referred to as a landmark, and does not then seem to have been new; in the still earlier days, such teaching as the children got they must

¹ Quincy, *Harvard University*, i. 29, 30, 508.

² As there is no reference made in the town records to any gift of this nature, it must apparently have been made through the church, or as the result of voluntary individual action. The proportion given in the text between the original gift and a corresponding gift at the present time seems so excessive that it is only proper to give the data on which the estimate is based. The population of Braintree in 1669 was about 550, and the gift to the college (\$292.43) represented as near as may be fifty-five cents to an inhabitant, or one and two thirds day's labor, the ordinary wages then being two shillings, or thirty-three cents a day. The population of the same territory now is 28,000, and the ordinary day's wages may be computed at \$1.75. The wages for one day and two thirds of a population of 28,000 would, therefore, be \$81,665.00.

Again, in 1669 the entire town and parish assessment of Braintree did not exceed £150, or \$500, which was raised only with extreme difficulty, being paid partly in money, partly in kind. The gift to the college amounted, therefore, to sixty per cent. of one annual tax levy. In 1889-90 the annual tax levy of the four towns into which old Braintree has been divided, amounted to over \$310,000.00, paid in money, and without apparent inconvenience to the people paying it. Sixty per cent. of this amount would have been \$186,000, a sum far larger than the estimate in the text.

have received at home, or in the house where some temporary teacher lodged. At last in 1679, thirty years after the gathering of the church, the town agreed with Benjamin Tompson that he should be schoolmaster, receiving for his services the rent of "the Towne land," estimated at £15 a year, and a further sum, to be paid out of the town rate, sufficient to secure him an annual salary of £30, or a third part of the Rev. Mr. Fiske's annual stipend, which was payable to the latter at that time "in countrey pay at countrey prise." Unlike the clergyman, the schoolmaster in this case did not look for his support merely to his salary; but, having graduated at Harvard eight years before, he was now endeavoring to make his way as a physician, and sought by teaching to eke out an insufficient professional income. Yet even this school was not free, for part of the agreement with Tompson was "that every child should carry into the school master halfe a cord of wood beside the quarter money every yeare;" and ten years later, in 1700, the nature of the contract was more specifically defined by a vote providing that "every schollar shall pay for his entry Into the school one shilling and so successively for every quarter for the whole year if he shall goe more than one quarter, and this shall be a part of the school sallary to be paid unto the schoolmaster, and he to give an account of all that came to the Selectmen." A year later yet more definite provision was made, for, the salary still standing at £30, the town voted that any "parent or master" sending a child to school pay the town treasurer for the support of the school five shillings a year, and proportionally for any part thereof; but, if such "parent or master" lived in another town, the payment in such case should be twenty shillings. The selectmen were further empowered to abate any part or the whole of this payment on the application of "any poor persons in this Town who shall find themselves unable to pay," and any deficiency over and above "the Rent of the Town Lands and the head money of the Schollars shall be raised by a Town Rate equally proportioned upon the Inhabitants." And this, the vote passed in 1701, sixty-one years after the incorporation of Braintree, seems to have been the initial step in the introduction there of a free public school

system. Prior to that time, schooling was apparently paid for in money or in produce by those immediately deriving advantage from it; for, not only in *Tompson's* day, but thirty-five years later, in 1715, the town voted "that all Parents or masters of all children or servants going to schools shall deliver into the present Schoolmaster, for the use of the School-house, three foot of cord wood to be the proportion of each child or servant for this year;" a change from the vote of 1710, under which the master was "impowered to demand a Load of wood of each boy that comes to school this winter." The explanation of so liberal a provision of fuel is probably to be looked for in *Samuel Maverick's* statement that, during the earlier colonial period, *Braintree* subsisted "by raising provisions, and furnishing *Boston* with wood," — wood, in other words, was "countrey pay at countrey prise," and those furnishing it paid in this way for the schooling of children and servants, no scholars, until the year 1701, being exempted from any payment at all. But, from and after 1701, the other policy prevailed, the cases of exemption increased, and a steadily growing part of the total school expenses was "Raised by a Town Rate equally proportioned upon the Inhabitants."

Benjamin Tompson has since been referred to as "an eminent and learned man," and, though this judgment may be open to question, there is little doubt he was what is known as "a character," — he also, like his father, was subject to "sullen fits," and in them was apt to be "full of matter." He seems, with intermissions during which others filled his place with more or less acceptance on the part of the town, to have kept the *Braintree* school from 1678 to 1704, a period of twenty-five years. In 1699 he got into a controversy with the town in reference to the payment of his salary, and presently, after appointing a committee to defend in case of prosecution, the inhabitants voted to allow "*Mr. Benjamin Tompson*" five pounds for a discharge in full, "and also that *John Ruggles, Sen.,* and *Lt. Samuel Penniman* should go and make the tender thereof unto him." The committee performed the duty assigned to them, and, "that all may issue in love," *Tompson*, accepting the five pounds tendered him, signed "a mutual and everlasting discharge." Ten years previous to

this, "19 Junis, Calendas, 1688," as "Physician and School Master of the town of Braintree," he sent a petition to Governor Andros, in which, referring to himself as "Your poor Supplicant," he described how his father, "a divine of good note, declaring it was not lands he came for, lived and died with his heart always above worldly things." Accordingly, he, "not begging as others did," put his son, the petitioner, "upon this essay;" so, having "a numerous race," and knowing "not any other way to gaine a lasting acknowledgment of my father's and his orphan's service in the towne," Benjamin Tompson begs a patent for certain lands, "which granted I shall owne your Excellence the Great Mæcenas and rebuilder of my decaying family." A year later he sent to the Governor another petition, — a species of reminder, — which he refers to as "my last," and in it he alludes to his occupation as "meane and Incouragements meaner;" but there is nothing to show that his suit was a successful one. Remaining in Braintree until as late as 1710, Tompson was the town clerk as well as its physician and schoolmaster, and the records, written in no unscholarly hand, were kept by him from 1690 to 1710; yet his wife witnessed her signature with a cross. An erudite man, he was fond of Latinity, and in 1693 made entry of the births of all his nine children, going back to 1670, and piously added these words: — "*Quos omnes, Deus omnipotens, pro unigeniti filii sui ac salvatoris nostri meritis, vita eterna dignetur.*"¹

A successor in the office of town clerk recorded of Mr. Tompson, that, a "Practitioner of Physick for above thirty years, during which time hee kept a Grammar School in Boston, Charlestowne and Braintry, having left behind him a weary world, eight children, twenty-eight grand children (he) deceased April 13th, 1714, and lieth buried in Roxbury. Atatis sue, 72." In the epitaph inscribed on his tombstone he is also referred to as "ye Renowned Poet of N. Eng." Born under a New England sky and amid Calvinistic surroundings, Benjamin Tompson was a contemporary of Dryden, Addison and Pope; but, unfortunately, though addicted

¹ "Whom all, may Almighty God, through the merits of his only begotten Son and our Saviour, deem worthy of life everlasting."

to versification, the results of his labor were to the full as devoid of imagination as they are of metre. Halting badly, even the best of his lines are suggestive both of paucity of thought and of the exigencies of rhyme. When Cotton Mather published the *Magnalia*, Tompson wrote to him some verses of a complimentary character, which are now printed with it. They contain one good line, in which, referring to the "ancient names," among them his father's, recorded in Mather's pages, the writer says they are

"Like gems on Aaron's costly breast-plate set."

Tompson's other contribution to the *Magnalia* consisted of a long copy of rhymed and more or less metrical lines in honor of the Rev. Samuel Whiting, of Lynn, an eminent seventeenth century divine, of whom it is recorded he wrote two books, in one of which he developed thirty-two distinct doctrines out of Abraham's prayer in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis; while in the other, more successful yet, he developed no less than forty-two such distinct doctrines out of the promise of the Lord contained in the fourteen verses of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Of him Benjamin Tompson, "ye Renowned Poet of N. Engl.," wrote:—

"Such awful gravity this doctor us'd
As if an angel every word infus'd.
No turgent stile, but Asiatic store;
Conduits were almost full, seldom run o'er
The banks of Time: come visit when you will,
The streams of nectar were descending still.
Much like Septemfluous Nilies, rising so,
He watered Christians round, and made them grow."

"Should half his sentences be truly numbred,
And weighed in wisdom's scales, 't would spoil a Lombard:

"The loss of such an one would fetch a tear
From Niobe herself, if she were here."

The building in which Tompson taught, and within the walls of which all the children of the town gathered, measured twenty feet by sixteen, "and seven foot between joynts." In 1715 it had grown old and was pronounced unfit to repair, and

the town, evidently much agitated over the issue, voted to erect two new houses, one "for the acomidating of a grammar School" not far from the North Meeting-house, and the other "a convenient School house for writing and reading" near the meeting-house "in the south end of this town;" then "the use of the old School house" was given to "Mr. Benjamin Webb" (excepting the stone and brick) "for the securing of his hay till the first of May next . . . after which the said old house was sold by the Committee to the said Benjamin Webb for three pounds, paid to the Treasurer."

The history of the Braintree schools, no less than that of the church, shows in a clear, striking way how slow was the process of developement during the colonial period, and how that period, — the New England chrysalis stage, — instead of ending with the Revolution, lasted down even to the year 1830. It is not too much to say that for one hundred and ninety years — through the lives of six generations of those born on the soil — the same identical system was pursued with regard to the schools and in them, the difference being only in degree and detail. First population spread, and the original town became the North Precinct, and the original town school the grammar school; then an elementary school, in which reading and writing were taught, was provided for the outlying districts. Two generations passed away while this phase of developement was working itself out. The precinct meanwhile grew, and in due process of time became a town; but this process required eighty years, and during those eighty years the old system was continued, almost unchanged. About the year 1720, the practice of exacting payment from the parents or master of each child taught was abandoned, the whole expense of maintaining the schools becoming a charge upon the town; but the selectmen still engaged the teacher, over whom and whose methods no supervision seems to have been exercised. In 1720 the master was paid thirty-four pounds a year; he had been paid thirty pounds in 1680, and he was paid only seventy-five pounds in 1792. The school-house of 1697 measured twenty feet by sixteen; the school-house built nearly a century later, in 1793, "on the training-field" and opposite the church, contained one large

school-room only, measuring twenty-eight feet by twenty, and its cost was estimated at ninety pounds. In 1815 this building was burned, and another was constructed in 1817 to serve both as town-hall and school-house. It measured twenty-five feet by fifty, and cost a little more than \$2,000. It was the last structure of the colonial period, — the chrysalis stage was near its end, and the integument was soon to be rent.

The first stage of differentiation in school matters took place in 1717, when provision was made for elementary instruction, independent of the grammar school, in the South Precinct. Two years later, as population spread yet more, the experiment of making this school peripatetic in character was attempted, and it was voted that it "may be moved into more than one place." In 1757 the same experiment was tried with the grammar school, which it was provided should the ensuing year "be kept the one half of the time in the North Precinct, the other half in the Middle Precinct," while "an Equal sum as shall be necessary for the maintaining a Grammar School be Employed under the Direction of the Selectmen for writting and Reading Schools in the several parts of the North and Middle Precincts." In 1739 a species of special school committee had been provided, at the head of which Col. John Quincy was placed, which was "Impowered to provide a School Master," and "to order the time and place when the school shall be kept in each precinct;" but, the very next year, "after some debate thereon," it was ordered — "That the affair of the Schools be regulated by the Selectmen, In all things as heretofore." And so the thing went on from year to year through nearly a century, every possible crude experiment and makeshift being tried in turn, — what was attempted one year being abandoned the next, while the grammar school served as a sort of a shuttle-cock, as it shot about here and there under the impacts of local jealousy and sectional requirement. It was this chronic condition of affairs which, as will presently be seen, was at last the immediate and ostensible cause of the disruption of the original town.

Even after the separation took place, and the necessary remedy for the old condition of affairs was thought to have

been applied, the school facilities of the new town long remained of the most primitive character. For eight years, and until 1800, the ancient precinct feeling controlled the policy of Quincy so that all children whose parents desired them to be taught had to find their own way to the centre. In a town the size of Quincy, their so doing implied a daily walk measured in many cases by miles. For the smaller children this was generally found to be too severe, and provision was made for local or "dame" schools, for which specific sums varying from four dollars to forty dollars were annually appropriated. Yet in the year 1820 the whole amount voted for the support of the centre school, "including ink and fuel," as well as the pay of both a male and a female teacher, was but \$692. It is now, therefore, small matter for surprise that a committee then reported the school-room so crowded that the scholars, two hundred and four in number, "were obliged to wait one for the other for seats, notwithstanding the master gave up his desk, and used every other means in his power to accommodate them." Still the town had not yet reached the stage of differentiation. With the innate conservatism of a community accustomed to majority government, it clung to the primitive customs; and the committee went on to submit a plan for certain alterations, at an estimated cost of \$200, by which two hundred and fifty scholars were to be brought together in one room and under one master, "with an assistant when necessary." Then in 1825 the master was censured for not attending more faithfully to his duties; whereupon he replied that he was not paid enough (\$450 per annum) to support him, but if the town would increase his salary to \$500 he would devote all his time to the schools. This addition to the master's salary increased the total appropriation to \$745, leaving \$245 with which to pay the female assistant and defray all other school charges. At last, in 1829, the condition of affairs had become intolerable, and provision was made for the district system. The chrysalis stage was over.

Of the old town school of Braintree, and the system of instruction pursued in it, it is needless to speak at length. The schools of Braintree were like the schools of most other

Massachusetts towns similarly placed, and those schools have been often described. They were wholly primitive, and the New England Primer, with the Rev. John Cotton's Spiritual Milk for American Babes, affords for modern eyes a sufficient glimpse of them. In the pages of that quaint little volume, — a volume used as a text-book by six generations of Massachusetts progeny, — besides the singular results achieved by native artists in their efforts to portray to the physical eye the experiences of Elijah, Job, Lot, Obadiah, Timothy, Zaccheus and other Hebrew characters of Biblical fame — may still be studied the intellectual nutriment once deemed most appropriate for New England infants who were acquiring a knowledge of the alphabet. They were cheered and inspired by being taught verses like these: —

“ There is a dreadful fiery hell,
Where wicked ones must always dwell;
There is a heaven full of joy,
Where goodly ones must always stay;
To one of these my soul must fly,
As in a moment, when I die.”

And soothing doctrine of this character was then emphasized and brought home to the childish imagination by ditties like the following: —

“ In the burying place may see
Graves shorter there than I,
From death's arrest no age is free,
Young children too must die:
My God, may such an awful sight
Awakening be to me.”

The infant mind having through such agencies as this been brought into a thoroughly receptive condition, the Rev. John Cotton then took the matter in hand, and thus administered to the babes what was regarded as milk “for their Souls Nourishment, drawn out of the Breasts of both Testaments:” —

“ Q. What is done for you in the Lord's supper ?

“ A. In the Lord's supper, the receiving of the bread broken and the wine poured out is a sign and seal of my receiving the communion of the body of Christ broken for me, and of his blood shed for me, and thereby of my growth in Christ and pardon and healing of my sins, of the fellow-

ship of the Spirit, of my strengthening and quickening in grace, and of my sitting together with Christ on his throne of glory at the last judgment.

“Q. What is the reward that shall then be given?

“A. The righteous shall go into life eternal, and the wicked shall be cast into everlasting fire with the devil and his angels.”

This is followed in the Primer by a familiar rhymed “dialogue between Christ, Youth and the Devil,” — a sort of closing spiritual and educational divertisement, in which Death is again introduced as saying to the terrified child, —

“Thou hast thy God offended so,
Thy soul and body I’ll divide:
Thy body in the grave I’ll hide,
And thy dear soul in Hell must lie
With Devils to Eternity.


“THE CONCLUSION.

“Thus end the days of woful youth,
Who won’t obey nor mind the truth;
Nor hearken to what preachers say,
But do their parents disobey:
They in their youth go down to hell,
Under eternal wrath to dwell.
Many don’t live out half their days,
For cleaving unto sinful ways.”

Such in those days was the milk adjudged meet for babes; and this was the old time school-book of which it is asserted that there never has been printed in this country a book laying no claim to inspiration, whose influence has been so extended and enduring as a manual of religious instruction for the young, while societies have been formed the sole purpose of which was to introduce it into schools!

No print or black-board or map or motto adorned the grimy, blackened walls of those primitive colonial school-houses, in which the New England Primer was the earliest text-book, but within their narrow limits were crowded scores of children of both sexes and of every age. Ranged twos and threes on benches, behind rude rows of desks cut and hacked and mutilated by the jackknives of successive generations, the larger scholars, among whom were full-grown

young men and women, sat at the rear, the sexes on opposite sides, while the smallest of the little children occupied low benches close to the teacher's chair. Great logs of wood blazed in the fireplace, or later in stoves, one of which was at each end of the room, and before these they read and ciphered and wrote. The period was not one of either refinement or sentiment, and both at home and in the school the rod — "the rawhide" — was freely used; nor did either sex or age afford immunity from corporal punishment which would now excite indignation if inflicted on dogs. In the matter of instruction, the public records of the two preceding centuries, as compared with those of the present century, show clearly the increasing elevation of standard. The town and precinct clerks certainly were not then, any more than they are now, chosen for conspicuous illiteracy, and the records prior to 1800 are conclusive as evidence of the instruction in writing given in the public schools of the period; nor is there any reason to suppose the instruction in other respects was better, or the results attained more creditable. In point of fact the children were neither taught much, nor were they taught well; for through life the mass of them, while they could do little more in the way of writing than rudely scrawl their names, could never read with real ease or rapidity, and could keep accounts only of the simplest kind. As for arithmetical problems, the knowledge of them was limited to the elementary principles of division, addition and subtraction. None the less, after a fashion and to a limited extent, the Braintree school child, like the school children of all other Massachusetts towns, could read, could write and could cipher; and for those days, as the world then went, that was much. In itself, though the highest of the time, the standard was not high; nor does an examination of what has been handed down to us justify, or indeed afford any reasonable basis for the laudation so frequently indulged in of late over the thoroughness of the ancient school methods, or the excellent results achieved by them. It is well to extol the simplicity and directness of what are known as the good old times, but the further familiarity with them is pressed, the less alluring do their details and actualities appear, and the more do they tend to make those



living in the present contented with their lot. Brutality, ignorance and coarseness have not yet vanished from the world, nor are they soon likely to vanish from it: but it is safe to say that, if by any chance the Braintree village school of 1790 should for a single fortnight be brought back to the Quincy of 1890, parents would in horror and astonishment keep their children at home until a town-meeting, called at the shortest possible legal notice, could be held; and this meeting would probably culminate in a riot, in the course of which school-house as well as school would be summarily abated as a disgrace and a nuisance.

CHAPTER XII.

INTEMPERANCE AND IMMORALITY.

BUT if, in the matter of schools, constant effort has in the lapse of time worked a vast improvement in Quincy, the improvement as respects the public houses has been yet more marked. In the days before railroads, mails and newspapers the tavern was the common gathering-place of the town, where the news was circulated and the events of the day discussed. Here the politics of the village were arranged, and here the questions at issue between the colonies and the mother country were debated. From his early life John Adams detested taverns. He declared that in them "the time, the money, the health and the modesty of most that were young and many old were wasted ; here diseases, vicious habits, bastards and legislators were frequently begotten." Yet of their potency as a political educator and influence he was a living witness. More than thirty years afterwards he thus described one of these colonial public-house debates : —

"Within the course of the year before the meeting of Congress, in 1774, on a journey to some of our circuit courts in Massachusetts, I stopped one night at a tavern in Shrewsbury, about forty miles from Boston, and as I was cold and wet, I sat down at a good fire in the bar-room to dry my greatcoat and saddlebags till a fire could be made in my chamber. There presently came in, one after another, half a dozen, or half a score, substantial yeomen of the neighborhood, who, sitting down to the fire after lighting their pipes, began a lively conversation upon politics. As I believed I was unknown to all of them, I sat in total silence to hear them. One said, 'The people of Boston are distracted.' Another answered, 'No wonder the people of Boston are distracted. Oppression will make wise men mad.' A third said, 'What would you say if a fellow should come to your house and tell you he was come to take a list of your cattle, that Parliament might tax you for them at so much a head? And how should you feel if he was to go and break open your barn, to take down your oxen, cows, horses and sheep?' 'What should I say?' replied the first; 'I would knock him in the head.' 'Well,' said a fourth, 'if Parliament can take away Mr. Hancock's wharf and Mr. Rowe's wharf, they can take

away your barn and my house.' After much more reasoning in this style, a fifth, who had as yet been silent, broke out, ' Well, it is high time for us to rebel; we must rebel some time or other, and we had better rebel now than at any time to come. If we put it off for ten or twenty years, and let them go on as they have begun, they will get a strong party among us, and plague us a great deal more than they can now. As yet, they have but a small party on their side.' . . . I mention this anecdote to show that the idea of independence was familiar even among the common people much earlier than some persons pretend."

Later in life John Adams was wont to say, it was in silently listening to these tavern talks among farmers as he rode the circuits that he first came to realize that American independence was both inevitable and close at hand. But the school, though effective, was dangerous. The intemperance of the colonial period is a thing now difficult to realize; and it seems to have pervaded all classes from the clergy to the pauper. In the earliest days, beer brewed from barley malt was the usual table beverage, the ordinary and free use of which had been brought over from England; and the first brewery in Braintree—a simple, primitive affair—was established by Henry Adams, close to the town river and a short distance only from the meeting-house and the school, shortly after the town was incorporated. This was at the period when the price of beer was regulated by law, that sold at 3d. a quart carrying six bushels of malt to the hogshead; that at 2d., four bushels; and that at a penny, two bushels. But cider was the natural beverage of the soil, and, though more expensive than beer at first, as orchards became common it grew sufficiently cheap, inasmuch as in 1728, when an ounce of silver, the equivalent of a modern dollar, was worth eighteen shillings in currency, twelve shillings in currency sufficed to buy a barrel of cider. Indeed, in barrel quantities, cider at that time cost less than either Indian corn or carrots. Tea and coffee did not come into common use as table beverages until a much later period, and all through the eighteenth century the "generality of the people with their victuals" drank cider. But the juice of the apple failed to satisfy that love of strong drink—that craving for alcoholic stimulant—which the New Englander had inherited direct from his Saxon ancestry. Wanting something more potent, the West India

trade soon supplied it. Here is an extract from a sermon of Increase Mather delivered in March, 1686, before a criminal awaiting execution for murder, which tells the story : —

“It is an unhappy thing that later years a kind of strong Drink called Rum has been common amongst us, which the poorer sort of People, both in Town and Country, can make themselves drunk with. They that are poor and wicked too, can for a penny or twopence make themselves drunk: I wish to the Lord some Remedy may be thought of for the prevention of this evil.”

One hundred and ten years later, speaking of the work on his farm in Quincy, John Adams describes how one of the hands got drinking, and he adds : —

“A terrible drunken distracted week he has made of the last. A beast associating with the worst beasts in the neighborhood, running to all the shops and private houses, swilling brandy, wine and cider in quantities enough to destroy him. If the ancients drank wine and rum as our people drink rum and cider, it is no wonder we read of so many possessed with devils.”

Not until after 1830 did the great temperance movement make its influence felt, and for a century and a half, therefore, it is not too much to say that “rum” was the bane of New England. Braintree seems to have been scourged by it, even more than most of her sister towns. At the very time the town was incorporated, at the May General Court of 1640, Martin Sanders, who a year before had been “alowed to keepe a house of intertainment” at the Mount, and whose name was one of the eight subscribed to the church covenant there, was “alowed to draw wine at Braintree.” In 1731 a new church edifice was “raised,” and in the North Precinct records is the vote already referred to, authorizing the purchase for the occasion of “Bread Cheese Sugar Rum Sider and Beer at the cost of the precinct.” In 1754 Tutor Flynt made the memorable journey from Cambridge to Portsmouth. In addition to being a tutor, Mr. Flynt was then also a fellow of the corporation, and acted as clerk of the overseers. He had for his companion an undergraduate, and was in his seventy-eighth year. There are few more amusing and instructive pictures of the manners and methods of travellers in eastern Massachusetts during the eighteenth century than that contained in the account of this journey written by Tutor

Flynt's companion ;¹ but in that account there is nothing that sounds more singular to the reader of to-day than the way in which the venerable preceptor, travelling with the youthful student, took his "nip of milk punch" after they pulled up at the public house ; and when, "in full view of Clark's Tavern" near Portsmouth, the old gentleman was tumbled headlong out of the chaise, nearly breaking his neck, he was revived by "two or three bowls of lemon punch, made pretty sweet," which, as they "were pretty well charged with good old spirit," made him "very pleasant and sociable." In 1758 Samuel Quincy and John Adams were admitted to the province bar. After the oath had been administered on motion of Gridley and Pratt, the leading lawyers of their day, the two young men "shook hands with the bar, and received their congratulations, and invited them over to Stone's to drink some punch, where the most of us resorted, and had a very cheerful chat." It is not easy to imagine leading counsel of to-day drinking with students in a tap-room. Again, in 1778 Count d'Estaing came to Boston with the French fleet. Mrs. Adams visited it, and could not sufficiently express her admiration of the bearing of officers and men, which she said ought to make Americans "blush at their own degeneracy of manners." What delighted her most was, that "not one officer has been seen the least disguised with liquor since their arrival."

So bad had the condition of affairs become about the year 1750 that John Adams declared that several towns within his knowledge had "at least a dozen taverns and retailers." Suffolk County he asserted was worse than any other, and in Braintree, within a circuit of three miles, there were "eight public houses, besides one in the centre." Within three quarters of a mile on the main road there were three taverns, besides retailers, or those who supplied the "neighborhood with necessary liquors in small quantities and at the cheapest rates." These houses, frequented as they were by a "tippling, nasty, vicious crew," had become "the nurseries of our legislators," for there were many who could "be induced by flip and rum to vote for any man whatever." Aroused to the ne-

¹ *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* 1878, pp. 5-11.

cessity of doing something to restrain this growing evil, the young village lawyer had an article looking to some reduction of the number of licensed houses inserted in the warrant for the May town-meeting of 1761. A full debate took place upon it, and a vote was passed, which is chiefly curious now as indicating what the condition of affairs must have been for which this measure was regarded as one of reform. The vote reads as follows:—

“Voted, That, although Licensed Houses, so far as they are conveniently situated, well accommodated, and under due Regulation for the Relief and Entertainment of Travellers and Strangers, may be a useful Institution, yet there is Reason to apprehend that the present prevailing Depravity of Manners, through the Land in General, and in this Town in particular, and the shameful neglect of Religious and Civil Duties, so highly offensive in the sight of God, and injurious to the peace and Welfare of Society, are in a great measure owing to the unnecessary increase of Licensed Houses.

“Voted, That for the future, there be no Persons in this Town Licensed for retailing spirituous Liquors, and that there be three persons only approbated by the Selectmen as Innholders, suitably situated, one in each Precinct.

“Voted, That the Persons who are approbated as Innholders for the coming year, oblige themselves by written Instruments, under their Hands and Seals, to retail spirituous Liquors to the Town Inhabitants, as they shall have occasion therefor, at the same price by the Gallon or smaller Quantity, as the same are usually sold, by Retail, in the Town of Boston, and upon the performance of the above condition there be no Person or Persons approbated by the Selectmen as Retailers.”

It hardly needs to be said that such a measure of reform as this produced no result. Revolutionary troubles then shortly ensued, and John Adams was called away to larger fields of usefulness. Long afterwards, referring to this experience, he wrote:—

“Fifty-three years ago I was fired with a zeal, amounting to enthusiasm, against ardent spirits, the multiplication of taverns, retailers, and dram-shops and tippling-houses. Grieved to the heart to see the number of idlers, thieves, sots and consumptive patients made for the use of physicians, in those infamous seminaries, I applied to the Court of Sessions, procured a committee of inspection and inquiry, reduced the number of licensed houses, etc. But I only acquired the reputation of a hypocrite and an ambitious demagogue by it. The number of licensed houses was soon reinstated, drams, grog and sotting were not diminished, and remain to this day as deplorable as ever. You may as well preach to the Indians against rum as to our people.”

When John Adams made his futile attempt at temperance reform, and for seventy years thereafter, the town in which he lived was as respects intemperance no better and no worse than her sister towns. In every store in which West India goods were sold, and there were no others, behind the counter stood the casks of Jamaica and New England rum, of gin and brandy. Their contents were sold by the gallon, the bottle or the glass. They were carried away, or drunk on the spot. It was a regular, recognized branch of trade; and when during the Revolution Mrs. Adams sent a list of current prices to her husband, she always included rum, looking upon it as just as important a farm staple as meat or corn or molasses. Three shillings a gallon, or ninepence a quart, was a high price; and John Adams wrote back to her from Philadelphia, "Whiskey is used here instead of rum, and I don't see but it is just as good."

Rum or whiskey for home and farm consumption were here spoken of; for among laboring men rum was served out as a regular ration, and during the early years of the present century a gallon of it a month was considered a fair allowance for each field hand. It was used especially during the haying season and at hog-killing; for the latter it was mixed with molasses and known as "black-strap," while, compounded for the former with cider, the result was called "stone-wall." It is not easy now to get any correct idea of what must have been the physical condition of the average farm laborer during the New England haying season of a century ago. He worked with scythe or fork for ten hours a day under a sun of tropical power, and the unnatural heart action necessarily incident to exertion of this kind was then stimulated by draughts of cider reinforced by an infusion of New England rum. How, with blood naturally fevered by heat, and throat and tongue artificially coated by alcoholic stimulants, the laborer of those days slept at all, after a day in the haying field, is difficult now to understand. Every rule of health or principle of physiology, as now understood, was not only disregarded, but habitually set at defiance. Under the midday heat of an almost vertical sun, men worked with hardly an intermission, while such meat as they ate was strongly impreg-

nated with salt, and the craving of thirst was assuaged by draughts of a fiery stimulant. Even as late as 1838 it was voted in Quincy town-meeting that "the paupers be allowed a temperate use of ardent spirits when they work on the road or farm."

For consumption at home and on the farm, rum was bought from the retailers, and they thus constituted one distinct class of licensed sellers. The innholders were another class; and upon the main street of the North Precinct, in its most thickly settled part, there were three taverns standing at convenient points. They were buildings of a type still not uncommon in the more remote and older New England towns. Two stories high, they faced the road, and before them was the hitching-rail; while stables and covered standing-sheds stretched away on either side or to the rear. A piazza or gallery ran along the front, on which sat in summer those who most frequented the house; while in winter they gathered before the bar-room fires. The village toppers were as much recognized characters as the minister and the magistrate. They remained so in Quincy down to the beginning of the railroad period. The children all knew them, nor as they reeled through the streets did they attract more than a passing glance. Prematurely old, they drank themselves into their graves; and another generation of the same sort succeeded them.

At a later period great numbers of the more energetic youth of the town went out to California and the West, a portion of the New England migration. It was astonishing and lamentable to note the destruction then wrought by this inherited vice. Failure was the rule; and in the majority of cases the failure was due to drink. In this matter it is easy to charge exaggeration, and neither the gravestone nor the registry bear witness to the facts. Those who remember the old condition of affairs also are fast passing away. Yet any man of middle life, who has talked of his townspeople and of their families with a Massachusetts man or woman born near the close of the last century, has been exceptionally placed if he has not heard the same old tale of lamentation. As the name of one after another is recalled, the words "He drank himself to death" seem so often repeated, that they

sound at last not like the exception, but the rule. It was certainly so with Braintree and Quincy.

Where there is drunkenness there is vice and crime. It of course does not follow that in communities where there is no intemperance crime is unknown. The experience of all ages and many countries demonstrates the falsity of this proposition; but none the less the other proposition is true. In New England the enforced industry, the religious training, and the law-abiding habits of the people during the colonial period modified to some extent the evils of intemperance. The New Englander was neither an Irishman nor an Indian; and so he did not in his cups become fighting drunk like the first, or sodden drunk like the last. The habits and traditions and ingrained training of a race assert themselves even through liquor. Consequently, a Donnybrook fair was in Yankee inebriety as unknown a feature as a Mohawk war-dance. When they were sober the people were not quarrelsome or lawless or shiftless; and consequently when they were drunk they did not as a rule fight or ravish or murder. But that the earlier generations in Massachusetts were either more law-abiding or more self-restrained than the latter, is a proposition which accords neither with tradition nor with the reason of things. While the habits of those days were simpler than they now are, they were also essentially grosser; and where, in a small community, every class of which has been brought up in a school of the severest economy, and with a profound regard for the austere conventionalities of local public opinion, the eyes of all are upon each, the general scrutiny is a potent safeguard of morals. It becomes, then, a question of standards; for the standard of morality, such as it is, whether high or low, will always be observed, and very generally lived up to.

Was the moral standard of the Massachusetts towns during the colonial period high or low, as compared with the standards at the same time in vogue elsewhere, or that now in vogue here? — The answer to this question is one by no means free from doubt. The great essentials of popular morality — the cardinal virtues in a community — are cleanliness, truthfulness, temperance and chastity. As respects cleanliness, and that decency of living which distinguishes man from

the brutes, though primitive if judged by modern standards, the colonial New Englander contrasted favorably with other communities of the same time, whether in America or in Europe. Decidedly less archaic, he was regarded as somewhat unnecessarily disposed in speech and act to ignore what others were accustomed to consider and treat as matter of course. Untruthfulness is an attribute of servility. The New Englander never was servile. On the contrary, he was noted rather for the disagreeable, even when innocent, assertion of his equality. Accordingly, when he had recourse to falsehood, which was not unfrequently the case, he had recourse to it, not as a subterfuge or from fear, but in order to secure an advantage, or save himself from loss. In this respect, while the New England standard was not high in itself, it might have been much lower. To convict an opponent of falsehood — to brand him as a liar — was the result most carefully held in view in every controversy; and this fact in itself showed conclusively the high regard in which truthfulness was held. Nevertheless, as a race, the genuine and average New Englander probably felt more annoyance, or perhaps pain, at his detection in a falsehood, than remorse at the thing itself. In this respect he was in the earlier stages of moral development. Of the lack of temperance in colonial Massachusetts, at least during the whole of the eighteenth century, something has already been said, and more will have to be said presently, so that the question of chastity, or sexual continence, alone remains now to be considered.

Not unlike all other communities in this respect, there is probably no Massachusetts town which does not have its traditions throwing gleams of light, as lurid as they are suggestive, into the dimness of the past. Some such certainly linger about Quincy, — traditions which for long years have caused certain dwellings to be looked upon askance, and whispered of as haunted, and which have given to once honored names a weird-like sound. Traditions of this sort generally centre about some domestic tragedy, the essential feature of which is always the same, while the details admit of infinite variation; and this tragedy is remembered, making a deep impression on posterity, while the fact that in its character it was wholly excep-

tional is lost sight of. It dominates the past, destroying all correct sense of proportion.

The records of its churches tell the story of the moral life and moral standards prevailing in the towns of Massachusetts between the year 1650 and 1800. If made public, those records would reveal much which would now excite surprise, and, in some quarters, dismay; but in studying their pages it is necessary to bear several things constantly in mind, not least important among which is the fact that those pages deal in a concentrated form with exceptional cases only, spreading over long periods of time during which the great mass of mankind moved along with unnoticed regularity. The records, also, tell the story of a church discipline and oversight, severe and well-nigh all-pervading, such as would now be regarded as scarcely less impertinent than tyrannical, the patient submission to which in the times now under discussion is a thing in itself most significant. The church then took public cognizance of drunkenness, of domestic discord and the neglect and disregard of family duties, and, above all, of cases of incontinence. The continued and active existence of such an inquisitorial power is in itself strong evidence of the high average morality of those upon whom the power was brought to bear, and who moreover not only thus used, but, themselves, controlled it. The community was the church, and in that community there was practically but one class. No one was privileged; what was criminal in one was criminal in all; what was condoned to one was condoned to all. This was a fundamental fact, and it had a close bearing on the relations of the sexes; for in Massachusetts there were no lords of the manor and peasantry, as in Europe, or masters and servile class, as in the South. There were well-defined social grades, it is true, but nothing which even approached to the distinctions of caste. Accordingly, domestic and social practices derived from primitive times and other countries, which under certain social conditions would have tended directly to general profligacy, were in New England comparatively innocuous. They left, none the less, a deep mark on the records.

Again, in colonial Massachusetts there was, outside of Boston, which was a seaport town of large commerce, no appre-

ciable criminal class, whether male or female. Individuals enough existed with criminal tendencies more or less fully developed, — the weak and misled, or the inherently vicious, — and such there will always be in every community ; but during the colonial period there was no considerable or recognized portion of the Massachusetts community those composing which made their avowed livelihood, such as it was, by vice or crime. In the absence of this class, many of the extraordinary confessions and cases of discipline revealed to us through the records implied consequences then very different from what similar confessions would imply now. They would under existing conditions, in which vice has been developed into a profession, involve for the maker a social degradation to the level of those in that profession ; whereas, under the conditions then prevailing, the same offences were looked upon as lapses of a comparatively venial character, and were not only readily condoned, but seem to have been speedily forgotten. Critically examined, and judged by the more primitive, less conventional and coarser standards of the time, — the very existence of which standards implied the absence of what must be termed professional vice and degradation, — judged by these standards, the entries in the old church records are in no way either hard to understand, nor are they discreditable to the generations to which they relate. On the contrary, the very fact that the exceptional cases are recorded as matter for discipline, is conclusive evidence that those cases were exceptional.

When left to itself, the stern church discipline of the colonial period, though it reflected a severe morality, did not ignore the fact that those with whom it dealt were human. At times, especially in periods of so-called religious revival, or under the immediate influence of some strong individual nature, the church lost its head, and it would then seek to establish some code of morality at variance with human nature ; but the bow, thus overdrawn, invariably broke. Such was the case with Jonathan Edwards, the greatest of American theologians, than whom no one could have been more devout, or purer, or more lofty minded. Edwards, with the most elevating ends in steady view, treated his church, com-

posed of men and women, — and young men and young women, — as if it had been, or, at least could be, disciplined and purged of every unregenerate trait; and he did all in love. Jonathan Edwards flourished just one century after Governor William Bradford, of Plymouth, and during that century human nature had not greatly changed; but the Northampton divine had less of worldly wisdom than the Plymouth magistrate, for the latter, lamenting in 1642 over the “notorious sins, espetially drunkenness and unclainnes,” of the community he had helped to found and to foster, consoled himself with the reflection “that it may be in this case as it is with waters when their streames are stopped or dammed up; when they gett passage they flow with more violence, and make more noys and disturbance, then when they are suffered to rune quietly in their owne chanel. So wikednes being here more stoppd by strict laws, and the same more nerly looked unto, so as it cannot rune in a comone road of liberty as it would, and is inclined, it seerches every wher, and at last breaks out wher it getts vente;” and the writer then goes on with these further words, than which none could better express the probable conclusion which any careful investigator would reach who undertook to draw a comparison between the morality of colonial Massachusetts and that of the present time, or of other countries of the same time: —

“Heer (as I am verily perswaded) is not more evils in this kind, nor nothing nere so many by proportion as in other places; but they are here more discovered and seen, and made publick by due serch, inquisition, and due punishment; for the churches looke narrowly to their members, and the magistrats over all, more strictly than in other places. Besides, here the people are but few in comparison of other places, which are full and populous and lye hid, as it were, in a wood or thicket, and many horrible evils by that meens are never seen nor knowne; whereas heer, they are, as it were, brought into the light, and set in the plaine feeld, or rather on a hill, made conspicuous to the veiw of all.”¹

¹ Bradford, 385-6; see also the paper on Some Phases of Sexual Morality and Church Discipline in Colonial Massachusetts, in *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Series II. vi. 477-516.

CHAPTER XIII.

HEALTH, READING, DIVERSIONS.

AS, in course of time, the striking exception is remembered and becomes the rule in matters of morality, so in regard to physical health and longevity particular cases of old age in each family are long borne in mind, while the average death is ignored. Some grandparent, uncle or aunt, who nearly completed a century, will cause a whole family to be reputed long-lived, though half those belonging to it have died before forty. The physical health of the people of colonial Massachusetts towns was far less good than it has since become. The average human life was not so long. As must naturally have been the case, the drinking habits of the last century generated a class of diseases of their own, besides *delirium tremens*. Men broke down in middle life, dying of kidney and bladder troubles, or living with running sores which could not be closed. It is singular to find how common it was for fathers to die at an age between forty and fifty. Rheumatism was more prevalent then than now. A closer and more scientific observation has given new names to old ills, tracing them back to their sources ; but, referring to the frequent cases of Bright's disease brought to his notice during the latter part of his life, the last and shrewdest medical practitioner in Quincy of the old, country-doctor school was wont to remark that he had known the new disease for fifty years, but they "used to call it dropsy, and the patients died." Not only were visitations of the smallpox periodical, but in 1735 the diphtheria raged fearfully, and again in 1751. Indeed, in this latter year more than a hundred and twenty died of it in the neighboring town of Weymouth out of a population of only twelve hundred. In 1761 an epidemic raged among the old people of Braintree, carrying off seventeen in one neighborhood. In 1775, during the excitement of the siege of Boston, a chronic dysentery prevailed to such an extent that three,

four, and even five children were lost in single families, and Mrs. John Adams, writing from amid the general distress, could only say, "The dread upon the minds of the people of catching the distemper is almost as great as if it were the smallpox."

Notwithstanding such facts as these, it ever has been, and probably always will be, the custom to look back upon the past as a simpler, a purer, and a better time than the present; it seems more Arcadian and natural, sterner and stronger, less selfish and more heroic. As respects New England and Massachusetts, this idea is especially prevalent among those of the later generations, and, indeed, has been almost sedulously inculcated as an article of faith. The growing laxity of morals, the decay of public spirit, the vulgarity of manners and the general tendency of the age to deteriorate, have from the very beginning of New England been matters of common observation; and immediately after the Revolution, in 1784, the papers were crying out against "the extravagances of the present day" and lamenting the vanished "simplicity in dress and manners, temperance in meat and drinks, which formed the virtuous characters of our illustrious ancestors." Thus each generation has observed these symptoms with alarm; and each generation has in turn held up its fathers and mothers before its children as models, the classic severity and homely, simple virtues of which a plainly degenerate offspring might well imitate, but could not hope to equal. Those fathers and those mothers were not for days like these.

Yet a careful study of the past reveals nothing more substantial than filial piety upon which to base this grateful fiction. The earlier times in New England were not pleasant times in which to live; the earlier generations were not pleasant generations to live with. One accustomed to the variety, luxury and refinement of modern life, if carried suddenly back into the admired existence of the past would, the moment his surprise and amusement had passed away, experience an acute and lasting attack of home-sickness and disgust. The sense of loneliness incident to utter separation from the great outside world, the absence of those comforts of life which long habit has converted into necessities, the stern con-

ventionalities and narrow modes of thought, the coarse, hard, monotonous existence of the old country town would, to one accustomed to the world of to-day, not only seem intolerable, but actually be so. He would find no newspapers, no mails, no travellers, few books, and those to him wholly unreadable, Sunday the sole holiday, and the church, the tavern and the village store the only places of resort. Last week's politics at home and last month's abroad, the weather, the crops, the births, the deaths and the Sunday sermon would be the subjects of droning talk. Long after the North Precinct of the original town had been set off, and Braintree for over twenty years reduced to what had formerly been the Middle Precinct only, there was no post-office within the limits of the place, nor any public conveyance for letters, papers or persons; and "but for the occasional rumbling of a butcher's cart or a tradesman's wagon, the fall of the hammer on the lap-stone, or the call of the ploughman on his refractory team our streets had well-nigh rivalled the grave-yard in silence." Yet in those silent streets of the time of the war of 1812, the same high authority¹ asserted there was, as compared with the time of the Slave-holders' Rebellion, far more "brawling, shameless intoxication, quarreling, profaneness, vulgarity and licentiousness;" while "wine and spirits were imbibed at funerals to quiet the nerves and move the lachrymals of attendants," and "rowdiness and fisticuffs triumphed over law and order on town meeting, muster and election days."

As it was in Braintree so was it in Quincy, though in the latter town a post-office was established in 1795; probably through the influence and at the request of John Adams, then Vice-president, whose brother-in-law, Richard Cranch, was made postmaster. The postage on a letter from Quincy to Boston was then six cents; to Springfield, it was ten; to New York, fifteen. Before 1830 not a single copy of a daily paper found its way regularly to Quincy. As regards books the case was not much better. A library, in the sense in which the word is now used, was a thing unknown. Harvard College possessed one, it is true, and by 1830 the Boston Athenæum had reached a certain degree of growth; but in Quincy,

¹ Storrs, *Fiftieth Anniversary Sermon*, 32-3.

only after 1800 was there even a poor collection of ordinary standard books of the day, which, owned by a social club, were allowed sluggishly to circulate among its members. About the year 1704 "the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" had, indeed, sent over the small collection of books already referred to for the use of the rector of Christ Church in Braintree, and those volumes then, as now, loaded down the shelves of the vestry; but, wholly doctrinal, "their dark and ribbed backs, their yellow leaves, their thousand folio pages" repelled all but the professional student. Commentaries of Simon, Bishop of Ely, and of Hieronymus Zachius, the *Help to Devotion* of Thomas Comber and the Latin annotations of Grotius on the apostolic letters and the Apocalypse, — works like these even when bearing the dates of 1613 and 1679 and made interesting by the quaint device on the seal of the mother society were not mentally nutritious. More than eighty years later, and subsequent to 1788, John Adams had a library, large and interesting for those days, which at his death in 1826 he bequeathed to the town; but the works in it were little adapted for general reading, and the restrictions put upon its use were such as made it available only to scholars. Had it been otherwise, it would have made no difference. Before 1830 the people of Braintree and Quincy, as a whole, never having been accustomed to books and reading, did not really know what a library was or how to use it. Two generations of newspapers, railroads and book-stores were needed to convert New Englanders into a really reading race.

Going back to the earlier period, the Bible, and that alone, seems to have been found everywhere; while in the houses of the gentry might be seen copies of Shakespeare and Milton, a few volumes of the classics, the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*, the philosophical works of Locke and of Bolingbroke, a number of sermons and theological works now wholly forgotten, and, if the owner was a lawyer, a doctor or a minister, a few professional books. As a young man, on a Sunday, John Adams, in the old house at the foot of Penn's Hill, read Baxter's *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, and, for amusement, "Ovid's 'Art of Love' to Mrs. Savil."¹

¹ *Works*, 37.

The sensations of John Adams when he came back to this vegetating existence after having for thirty years been part of great events have already been alluded to. In winter he longed to hibernate as a dormouse. Yet he at least knew what he went back to, and expected nothing else. It would be otherwise with a visitor bred to modern usages. In his case an illusion would be dispelled. If his experience chanced to fall on a Sabbath of the last century and during the season between November and March, he would pass a day of veritable torture. In order to escape the tedium of the dwelling, if for no other reason, he would be forced to spend weary hours in a meeting-house scarcely as weather-proof and far less comfortable than a modern barn, in which the only suggestion of warmth was in that promise of an hereafter which was wont to emanate from the orthodox pulpit. Most of the remaining hours of the dreary day he would pass seated in a wooden, straight-backed chair, roasting one half of his person before a fire of blazing wood, while the other half shivered under the weight of an overcoat. If he conversed with a young lady, and she chanced to be of a "thinking mind," he might be confounded by "observations on actions, characters, events in Pope's Homer, Milton, Pope's Poems, any plays, romances, etc.," and struck dumb by being asked, — "What do you think of Helen? what do you think of Hector, etc.? what character do you like best? did you wish the plot had not been discovered in *Venice Preserved*?" He would sit down to dinner at one o'clock, and his repast would be set before him in the following order: "first course, a pudding made of Indian corn, molasses and butter; second, veal, bacon, neck of mutton, potatoes, cabbages, carrots and Indian beans; Madeira wine, of which each drank two glasses."¹ At two o'clock all would go to afternoon service. In his bedchamber the wayfarer to the last century would, were he treated as a member of the family, find no water for washing; for, if exposed overnight, it would be solid ice in the morning. If among personal virtues cleanliness be indeed that which ranks closest to godliness, then, judged by nineteenth century stand-

¹ Fearon, *Narrative of a Journey*, etc., in which is described a Sunday at the house of John Adams, in 1817.

ards, it is well if those who lived in the eighteenth century had a sufficiency of the latter quality to make good what they lacked of the former. Prior to 1830 there certainly was not a bath-room in the town of Quincy, and it is very questionable whether there was any utensil then made for bathing the person larger than a crockery hand-bowl. The bath-room is a very modern institution ; nor was the ordinary laundry wash-tub, of which it is an outgrowth, by any means in family requisition each Saturday night. In 1650 it is recorded that those dwelling in certain portions of the British Isles did " not wash their linen above once a month, nor their hands and faces above once a year." As compared with these the New Englander was cleanly, but even his ewers and basins were strictly in keeping with a limited water supply, and in 1627, Dr. Cotton Mather took pains to advise candidates for the ministry "daily to wash your Head and Mouth with Cold Water," as a " Practice that cannot be too much commended ; If it were only for saving you from the Toothache."¹

When the temperature of a bedroom ranges far below the freezing-point, there is small inducement for the person who has slept therein to waste any unnecessary time in washing or dressing. So when Monday morning came, the visitor to the good old days would huddle on his clothes and go down, blue and shivering with cold, to the sitting and breakfast-room, in which he would find a table spread with a sufficiency of food, neither well cooked nor well served. The salted meat and heavy bread made of Indian meal and rye he would wash down with draughts of milk or hard cider, though in a few houses tea might be offered him. All day he would look in vain for a newspaper, or a letter, or even a distant echo from the outside world. Weary with the monotony of in-door life, the nineteenth century exile might wander forth and watch for a time the hands on the farm as they hauled and split wood, husked corn, or tended the stock. Then he would find his way through the village. On the bare and dreary road he would meet only an occasional chaise or traveler on horseback, and an ox-cart or two loaded with cordwood or produce ; a few children might be on their way to or from the half-

¹ *Manuductio ad Ministerium*, 132.

warmed school-house in which they huddled together on the long, hard benches, shivering for hours. Coming at last to the tavern, and driven into it in search of warmth and comfort, he would understand at a glance why the New Englander was intemperate. There, gathered round about the great fire in the bar-room, would be a half-dozen or more rough, sinewy Yankees smoking their pipes, drinking flip, and talking politics. The room might be dirty, the language coarse, the air foul with tobacco, and scenes of drunkenness might occur, but here was an escape from tedium, and a natural craving for society and excitement was gratified. It was the one form of sociability open to the average New Englander through the long, comfortless winter hours of enforced idleness.

With the tavern the circle would be complete, unless the stranger also stopped at the village store. There again he would find the occupationless lounge seated on the stools or leaning against the counter; and there also rum would be on sale, drawn by the glass or by the bottle from the barrels on tap at the rear of the room. The resources of the town would now be exhausted. It would only remain to return to the point of commencement, and, seated in the wooden chair, resume Baxter on the Soul, or the Tatler, or Paradise Lost, before the great wood fire. And so it went on as generation followed generation across the little stage. No change came; nor was change either expected or desired. To use again Burke's supremely happy phrase, it was the existence of a people "still, as it were, in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TOWN RECORDS.

As generally understood, the political record of an old New England town is the narrative of the connection of that town with the great current of external events. Yet, when so treated, it cannot but lose in great degree both its individuality and its significance. The events of large historical moment which have occurred within the limits of any town are necessarily few, and those few belong to general history. In most cases the narrative connected with events of this character is already familiar, and to go over it in a purely local connection is but to repeat a story which has been sufficiently told. It only remains to develop whatever of individuality there may have been in a particular unit of a remarkable system. Having a family resemblance, just as the individuals composing a community resemble each other in a general way, each of the Massachusetts towns in the early days had also characteristics and peculiarities of its own. In making a portrait of the individual, the attempt of the artist should be to impress on his canvas the traits peculiar to that individual, — not those which he had in common with all his neighbors. So in dealing with the New England town, the historical student should cut loose as far as possible from the general current of political events, and labor to bring into prominence that which made his particular town as an individual unit not altogether like its fellow units.

That which lends an especial interest to the New England towns, — the one thing which makes the careful study of them worth while, is the complete absence from their growth of all paternal or fostering care. The key-note is here struck. In the history of these towns, when closely studied and intimately known, all the phases of a natural development —

social, political and economical — can be observed. No extraneous influences come into play to confuse action and obscure results. All is easily understood. For those towns there was no prophet, no chief, no lord, no bishop, no king. Those dwelling in them were all plain people. As such, they were neither guided nor protected from above. They stood on their own legs, such as they were; and there was no one to hold them up. They had no “saviours of society;” nor, in their dark and troubled hours, did they look or call for such. When in March, 1623, there were indications of a general conspiracy of the Indian tribes, the little community at Plymouth did not seek for aid from without, but “it being high time to come to resolution, made known the same in public court. . . . But in the end . . . because it was a matter of such weight as every man was not of sufficiency to judge, nor fitness to know . . . therefore the Governor, his Assistant, and the Captain, should take such to themselves as they thought most meet, and conclude thereof.” And again, when in January, 1635, measures were taken at Whitehall preliminary to sending out to New England a Governor-General, the immediate representative of King Charles, the question was formally submitted to the clergy of the Massachusetts colony, sitting in solemn conference with the magistrates, — “What ought we to do if a Governor-General should be sent out of England?” And the answer came back quick and decisive, — “We ought not to accept him, but defend our lawful possessions, if we are able.” That answer was prophetic. In it was condensed and made concrete not only a century and a half of history, destined to include the War of Independence, but also the essence, moral and social, of a civilization, instinct with stubborn individuality and self-reliance. Its strength came from within; and it came from within, because each town, like Plymouth in 1623 and Massachusetts in 1635, as an organized political body worked out its problems in its own way. Neither were those problems simple. On the contrary, it has already been seen that in the course of the first hundred and ninety years of municipal life Braintree and Quincy had to deal in a practical way with almost every one of those questions which are wont to perplex statesmen. Re-

ligious heresies, land-titles, internal improvements and means of communication; education, temperance, pauperism and the care of the insane; public lands, currency, taxation and municipal debt, — all these presented themselves, and the people assembled in town-meeting had to, and did, in some fashion work out a solution of them. Nor, being wholly unaided, did they fail to do so. There was fortunately no inspiration in New England. It is needless to say that the solutions worked out were often rough, and superficial, and wrong. None the less they were the best of which those people were capable; and so best for them. They were working out their destiny in their own way, and paying for their experience as they went along. Their so doing marked an epoch in history.

It is in the towns and town records of Massachusetts, therefore, that the American historical unit is to be sought. The political philosopher can there study the slow development of a system as it grew from the germ up. The details are trivial, monotonous; and not easy to clothe with interest; yet the volumes which contain them are the most precious of archives. Upon their tattered pages, yellow with age, the hardly legible letters of the ill-spelled words are written in ink grown pale with age; but they are all we have left to tell us of the first stages of a political growth which has since ripened into the dominant influence of the new world. Nor is it too much to imagine that when the idea of full human self-government, first slowly hammered into practical shape in the New England towns, and as yet far from perfected, shall have permeated the civilized world and assumed final shape, then these town records will be accepted as second in historical importance to no other form of archives.

The first page of the first town book of Braintree bears the date of 1640. It is only legible in part, for, as was naturally to be expected, it is worn and mutilated by rough handling through two hundred and fifty years. Yet there is a singular fitness in the opening of that page, for it is in these words, — "The Schoole Land." Then follows the memorandum of a conveyance that year made, under which a portion of the tract originally allotted at "the Mount" to William Coddington

passed into the hands of the town as common lands, and was by it devoted to the support of a school. The first recorded act of Braintree, therefore, was to make a provision for common-school teaching; nor is the fact already alluded to unworthy of second mention, that the land thus set apart has even to the present time paid an annual rent for the purposes to which it was then dedicated. The second entry, made in the following year, is for the encouragement and protection of home enterprise. A monopoly in grinding corn is secured to Richard Wright so long as the mill he had built remains in the hands of him and his heirs, "unless it evidently appear that the said mill will not serve the plantation, and that he or they will not build another in convenient time." The site of this mill burned in 1675 and the stones which went into its foundation walls are still pointed out. Next a right of way is recorded. Then follows a provision, also already referred to, setting a precedent for all that legislation against aliens coming into the land which has from time to time found a place upon the American statute book. Strangers are forbidden to build house or cottage "within the libertys" of Braintree without the consent of those "chosen to dispose of the towne's affairs;" and a heavy money penalty is imposed on every sale of lands to any except "such as the townsmen shall approve on." Next, though an interval of more than two months intervenes between it and the last order, is a regulation which foreshadows all future municipal ordinances in relation to fire departments; every house-owner is ordered "to have a ladder to stand up against his Chimney" as a security against fire.

But it has already been mentioned that in the earliest colonial period town-meetings in the modern sense of the word were not regularly held, and no record was made of the action taken by the selectmen, who seem to have been agreed on in some informal way. Acknowledgments, transfers of land, and permits to take stone and timber from the commons were entered of record in the town book; and yet a dozen pages of it were not filled in as many years. The machinery of government was organized slowly, and only under the pressure of actual need. Nothing was done that did not have to be done.

But at last, in March, 1673, when the town was already a third of a century old, it was voted that thenceforth on the first Tuesday of March and the last Tuesday of October there should be general meetings of "the whole inhabitants" to make choice of their town officers and to agree upon all things that might concern the common welfare; while what were called "Publike meetings" of the qualified free-holders were convened upon "notis given," or measures were acted upon and votes passed "at a publike training day." Even then, for twenty years more, no record of these meetings was kept, nor were the names of the town officers entered in the book. Their election seems to have been held matter of common knowledge, and they met at each other's houses. This continued to be the case until after the original charter of 1629 — King Charles' charter — had been vacated in 1684. From 1631 to the time when the charter of William and Mary went into operation in 1692 no man could become a freeman in a Massachusetts town unless he was a church member. It was the period of the theocracy, — the period during which the church dominated the town. It has been estimated that not one fourth part of the adult male population of the average Massachusetts town were church members, and the business of the town seems to have been mainly carried on through the church organization. In the case of Braintree the parish records covering the period from September, 1639, to January, 1709, are lost, and the town records from 1640 to 1693 cover but thirty-six written pages, the larger portion of which are filled with copies of conveyances, leases and contracts. Not until the Revolution of 1688, did the political life of the town as distinguished from its religious life begin to assert itself; and, indeed, the change may be said to have then taken place, for Braintree heartily sympathized in the movement which overthrew Andros, though its action exemplified the extreme slowness in New England of seventeenth century political procedure. It was on the 18th of April that the popular rising in Boston took place, and the captain of the British frigate was seized, the ensign of revolt being raised on Beacon Hill. The next day Sir Edmund Andros was confined a captive, in the fort. Yet not until the 20th of May,

more than a month later, were "the Inhabitants of Braintree convened together to give their sentiments and minds about a present settlement of a Government." They then voted that the magistrates and deputies "chosen and Sworne in 86 bee re-instated." It was also voted "that the Hon^d. Waitt still Winthrop be major Generall of the Millitia of the Colony of the Mattathusetts," while "Capt. Edmund Quinsey," already acting as one of the Committee of Safety, which formed the provisional government of the colony until the arrival of the charter of William and Mary, was authorized to "Signe our returne of the names of the representitives and the order therein given them In the name of the Inhabitants." A fortnight afterwards another town meeting was held to take further action "about the emergencies that came under consideration" by choosing a representative to consult with the Committee of Safety thereon, and, so far as Braintree was concerned, the revolution of 1688 was then complete; the free-holders thereupon at once turned their attention from large affairs of state to providing, as already mentioned,¹ a hutch in which to secure "good wife Witty," sister of "Samuel Speere," she "being distracted."

It was not until 1693, five years after the Revolution, that a list of town officers first appears in the record-book, and from this time forward the machinery of town government was complete. The old theocracy then had ceased to exist by virtue of the provisions of the new charter; religious toleration was secured to those of all Christian sects except papists; the right of suffrage was bestowed on all adult male inhabitants, subject to a small property qualification; the chief executive officers of the Province were thereafter appointed by the King. The right to vote was thus practically opened to all, while the town-meeting was left wholly unrestrained in action. Though not so regarded at the time, the charter of 1692 was, therefore, from a wide and popular point of view, a vast improvement on that of 1629. Through its operation the religious organization was forced to give way to the political organization,—the theocracy disappeared, and the town-meeting took its place. The officers chosen in Braintree in

¹ *Supra*, 117.

1693, the year in which the new charter went into operation, were five selectmen, a town clerk and a commissioner, two constables, five tithingmen, and eight viewers of fences. The next year surveyors of highways and field-viewers were also chosen, and the first specific appropriation was made. It amounted to £9 13s. in colonial money, the pound being \$3.33, and it is instructive in its details. It reads as follows :

“five pounds to John Belcher’s widow’s maintenance, and thirty shilings to Thomas Revill for keeping William Dimblebee, and twenty-five shilings for the ringing of the bel and sweping the meeting-hous in the year 1694, and eight shilings for mending the pound, seven shilings to William Savill for dimblebe’s coffin, and eight shilings to constables for warning the Town, and five shilings for the exchange of a Town cow to Samuel Speer, and ten shilings to Thomas Bas for dept for ringing the bell formerly, this to be raised by rate.”

No provision was made for the payment of town officers, and, with the exception of the constables who notified town meetings, they seem at first to have served gratuitously. Nor when, in lapse of time, compensation was voted them for their services, was it based on any scale open to the charge of extravagance. A town treasurer was first chosen in March, 1695; two years later he was voted one pound, or \$3.33, for a year’s services, and thirty-two years afterwards the amount had increased to only £3, and that in a paper currency depreciated more than one half. In 1717 the town clerk was paid the sum of \$13.33 in full for his services through four years. The selectmen seem to have been first paid for making the rates in 1716, — twenty-seven years after a board was chosen; there were three of them and they received sums aggregating \$7.67. Even as late as 1770, when the board had been increased to five, its members were allowed for their services only the sum of £9, or \$6, each, while the town clerk had forty shillings, and the constable £3.

But in a general sketch such as the present it would not be profitable to enter into the petty details of municipal legislation through monotonous years. They repeated each other. Regular votes were passed in relation to the church, the commons, the school; and at times the dissent of certain freemen from the action had was noted. One Samuel Thompson al-

ready met with as a "prodigie of pride, malice and arrogance," and as such made the subject for severe church discipline, — this otherwise-minded Tompson, not to be confused with a deacon of the same name and period, especially seems to have opposed all outlays of an educational character. Certain large issues always loomed up as the engrossing questions of the time, upon the solution of which the common mind was fixed. Now it would be the matter of title, and determined resistance to the pretensions of Boston land claimants; and then the division of the town into precincts would force itself to the front. The village theatre of 1700 was in fact exactly like the national theatre of 1850, excepting only that it was not so large. As the tariff and bank issues in the latter were succeeded by the disunion issue, so in the former the question of title was followed by the demand for parochial division. The questions of title to the land and absentee ownership have already been sufficiently referred to, but a few words more may be given to the division of the town into precincts as illustrating the methods of the time. It has already been stated that the freemen of the two sections were so wrought up over this issue that they by no means abstained from angry words, and almost came to blows. For a time the battle raged over the amount of the minister's salary. Then an overt act of secession was resolved upon, and the frame of a new meeting-house raised. Finally a joint committee of eight, four being selected from each of the two precincts, was sent to "discourse with Mr. Fiske one with another, and bring report to the town whether there can be any proposals made that may and shall be complied with on either side that may be for the peace and satisfaction of both parts of the town." It was a committee of representative men, for Edmund Quincy served upon it, and it went on an errand of peace; but, as registered, it has now a warlike ring. Upon it were a lieutenant-colonel, two captains, one cornet, two sergeants, besides "Lieut. Deacon Savel." One only bore no military designation, plain "John Ruggles, senior." This was in March, 1708.

Apparently the committee did not "discourse" in vain, or perhaps the Rev. Mr. Fiske proved a successful peacemaker;

for steps were soon taken towards effecting a peaceful division. By December matters had been so far advanced that a special town-meeting was called, as the warrant ran, "then and there to consult and consider about, and if possible to fix upon a suitable and reasonable line of division, distinction, or limitation. . . . That said line be lovingly agreed upon and settled (if it may be)." Edmund Quincy was chosen moderator, and then ensued an angry and exciting debate, for the record reads that "after the warrants were read there were some immediately that did declare against the dividing of the town, and that they did refuse to Joyne with said Inhabitants in that affair, and requested that it might be entered with their names in the Town Book." The names were then recorded; and it is a significant fact that three at least of those names belonged to persons active in organizing the Episcopal church. They apparently desired no settlement of parochial disputes which did not cover their own case. But the division of the town into separate parishes was none the less effected, and this absorbing issue disposed of.

Town government was now thoroughly organized in Braintree; and, for purpose of illustration, the record of a single year will not be uninteresting. Take, for instance, that of 1710-11. During those twelve months, from March to March, three town-meetings were held, one in March, one in May, and one in November. At the March meeting town officers were chosen, and a special committee was appointed "to go and search the records at Boston with reference to the grant of the six thousand acres of land by the General Court to the town of Braintree." Twenty shillings were also voted to Joseph Bass as a suitable compensation for two years' service as town treasurer. At the May meeting the delegate to the General Court was chosen, and also a sealer of leather. At the November meeting a levy of thirty pounds was ordered to defray the town charges for the current year. Provision was then made for the increase of the town herds, and an appropriation of six pounds was made therefor. The schoolmaster, "Mr. Adams," was then "impowered to demand a Load of wood of each boy that comes to school this winter." It was then further voted that "twelve pounds be raised for John

Penniman, of Swansey, provided that the Town be forever cleared of him." Finally, the further order was passed by the North Precinct freeholders that Mr. William Rawson should have "liberty to build a Pew for himselfe and Family where the three short seats of the women's be, and so to joyn home to the foreseat of the women's in the old Meeting-house at the southwest end." To this same Mr. Rawson, it will be remembered, there had ten years before been conceded "the privilege of making a seat for his family between or upon the two beams over the pulpit, not darkening the pulpit."

CHAPTER XV.

THE INDIAN AND FRENCH WARS.

It is a noticeable fact that there is no trace whatever of the Indian wars to be found in the Braintree records. The entries referred to at the close of the last chapter were of the year 1710. The Indian wars were then over, and the questions which occupied the public mind were those usual to periods of peace. It does not need to be said that Braintree could not have escaped its share of the burdens of that severest New England trial when, and when only in New England history, the enemy was at almost every door. The long struggle with the French was carried on at a distance, and, so far as Massachusetts was concerned, entailed heavy drafts for men and money; but no camp-fire smoke was seen or hostile shot heard within the colony's limits. The forays of the Revolution were limited to the coast and one short memorable march to Concord. The war of 1812 caused for Massachusetts nothing more than needless alarms along the shore. The Rebellion was fought out at a distance. Not so the Indian wars. The struggle then, where it was not actually over the hearthstone, was at the threshold. Braintree was one of the more fortunate towns. Though a few wretched Indians lingered within its limits down even to the middle of the next century, the great plague of 1616 had within Braintree limits done its work thoroughly. Rum and smallpox finished what little pestilence had left. Accordingly, Braintree was never called upon, until King Philip's war, for anything more than men and money.

The first draft of this kind was in August, 1645. A war with Passacus and the Narragansetts was then threatening, and Maj.-Gen. Gibbons, he who had been a companion of Morton's at the Mount Wollaston of the old Maypole days,

was sent out in command of a force of two hundred men. Braintree, Weymouth and Dorchester were ordered to furnish three horses, with saddles and bridles, "to be at Boston by seven o'clock in the morning, the 18th of this 6th month," to accompany Gen. Gibbons; and it was Mr. Tompson, of the Braintree church, who was selected "to sound the silver trumpet along with his army." Among the commissary stores of this expedition, — "Bread, tenn thousand; beif, six hogsheads; fish, tenn kintalls," etc., — "strong water, one hogshhead; wine at your pleasure; beere, one tunn." These preparations proved too much for the savages and, it has already been said, they succumbed before a blow was struck.

Again, in 1653, the commissioners of the confederacy of New England colonies "conceived themselves called by God to make a present war against Ninigret, the Niantic sachem," and the next year it fell to Massachusetts to raise one hundred and eighty-three soldiers, foot and horse, to go forth in that cause. Braintree's quota was four men. Simon Willard, of Concord, was in command, and he mustered his force at Dedham on the 9th of October, 1655, and led it off through Providence to the shores of Long Island Sound. In fifteen days he was back at Dedham, having accomplished a military promenade.

Twenty years later came King Philip's war, and Braintree is said now to have received a scratch from the wildcat's claw. An insignificant Indian raid occurred, and four persons were killed, — "three men and a woman. The woman they carried about six or seven miles, and then killed her and hung her up in an unseemly and barbarous manner by the wayside leading from Braintree to Bridgewater." In consequence of the alarm occasioned by this raid a sort of frontier post was established on the Bridgewater road, and Richard Thayer, who had been "impressed" as one of the Braintree contingent, was put in charge of it. This individual has already been mentioned as a claimant of Braintree lands under an alleged Indian grant. It has also been stated that as a military commander Richard Thayer seems to have been instrumental in spreading many false alarms. He claimed the credit of capturing one John Indian, who was "so feeble and weake

that he came creeping under the fences, and not able for any action, being without arms." But Thayer's participation in this last exploit was by others denied. Nevertheless he afterwards brought in that bill for services and disbursements at this time, amounting to thirteen pounds, which has already been mentioned, and which the "Military Committee of Braintree" disallowed. In 1675 the town was called upon to furnish nineteen men for active duty, seven of them mounted. These figures now have an inconsiderable sound, and convey but a slight idea of the stress of war; yet a call for nineteen men was to Braintree of 1675, with its eighty families, as heavy a draft as a call for 600 men from those inhabiting the same territory during the war of the Rebellion, a little less than two centuries later.¹

In 1690 came the French war, and Braintree was called upon to furnish thirteen men for the ill-fated Quebec expedition under Sir William Phipps. The fate of these men was hard. The town records tell it in a way not to be improved upon:—

"The 9th of August there went soldiers to Canada, in the year 1690, and the smallpox was aboard, and they died six of it; four thrown overboard at Cape Ann, Corporal John Parmenter, Isaak Thayer, Ephraim Copeland and Ebenezer Owen, they; and Samuel Bas and John Cheny was thrown overboard at Nantaskett."

Two more of the thirteen, making eight in all, died shortly after reaching home. Yet, according to the Rev. Cotton Mather, "during the absence of the forces the wheels of prayer in New England had been continually going round." From the beginning this expedition had not been popular in Braintree. The young men had refused to be impressed, and Col. Edmund Quincy, on whom had fallen the duty of supplying the contingent called for, had been forced to write to old Governor Bradstreet, then the head of the provisional government, that there were among those impressed in Brain-

¹ Assuming the population of Braintree to have been 550 in 1675,—and in 1683, it consisted of "about ninety or a hundred families at the most" (Pattee, 52),—a levy of nineteen men in that year would have been equivalent to a levy of 230 men from Quincy in 1861–5, when the population was returned at 6,748. The largest number of men who enlisted from Quincy in any one year of the Rebellion was 304 in 1861.

tree "but two or three who will go. I can do no more, without there be some sent for, and made example to the rest. To behold such a spirit is of an awful consideration."

The French and Indian war was followed by a long period of quiet; and after the division of the Braintree church had been effected there was little about which the town was under any call to agitate itself. Accordingly for many years the records contain not much that is noticeable. The town organization, so far as offices were concerned, was complete after 1700, and an amount was annually appropriated to meet necessary expenses. This sum steadily increased, though its increase was caused probably as much by the fluctuating value of colonial paper money as by the needs of a wealthier community. In 1701, for instance, the rate was £40; about 1725 it averaged year by year over £90; in 1750 it was in the neighborhood of £160; and when the Revolutionary troubles began it had grown to £250. The minister's salary was not included in any of these levies, as after 1708 the precinct rate was kept separate from the town rate; nor was the entire amount spent during the later years raised by taxation. On the contrary, owing to the sale of the commons the town was then in remarkably good financial condition, receiving in 1770 from rents and interest more than £150 while the further amount raised by levy was but £80.¹

Townways were now laid out more frequently. The old coast road of 1639 was still the sole land route to Boston, but in February, 1715, "a Town Driftway (not to be open) one rod and halfe wide" was laid through Col. Edmund Quincy's farm, practically on the line of what nearly a century later became the direct turnpike road across the Neponset to Boston. This action of the selectmen, though requested by Col. Quincy, seems to have led to a question between him and the town. He was then the leading inhabitant of Braintree, serving as delegate to the General Court, acting as moderator of the town-meetings, and referred to in the records as the Hon. Col. Edmund Quincy, Esq. He now made a claim against the town, and at a meeting held on the 23d of March, 1719, it was "propounded by the moderator whether the town

¹ *Records*, 428.

would choose a committee to treat" with him as to compensation for any damage he might have sustained on account of the way laid out through his lands. The motion was rejected. The warrant for the next town-meeting contained an article for the townsmen "to consider of, debate upon and agree about an answer to the petition of Edmund Quincy, Esq.," relating to a driftway through his land. And now a committee was appointed. Six months later, at a meeting held on the 28th December, Col. Quincy was chosen moderator, and this committee made its report. It was brief, but significant. They "were of opinion That the Records on the Town's Book Relating to an highway or Town driftway through the Lands of the said Quincy, etc., as may appear on Record baring Date February the 15th, 1714-15 be erased, made void, and be as tho' it had never been. And it was then voted that the report of said Committee should be accepted with the Town." Subsequently, March 17, 1731, this way was regularly laid out and accepted.

Other questions, which through this period continually occupied the attention of the town in a mild way, related to the six thousand acre grant, the unauthorized taking of stone from the commons, the growth of the timber upon them, a political division of the town, and, above all, the obstruction caused to the passage of alewives up into the Braintree ponds by the dam in the Monatiquot at the old iron-works. The freemen seem never to have been able to agree as to what should be done with the land grant, so they wrangled and debated over it, never reaching any definite conclusion. It was their land question of the day; but, like most such questions, it is devoid of interest now. As respects the stone on the commons, there is an entry in the record of a special town-meeting held to consider the subject, on the 30th December, 1728, which is characteristic, and has in it a touch almost like humor. The meeting came together and chose a moderator. The record then proceeds as follows:—

"After which they proceeded to act upon the first article or clause in the warrant, and after sundry votes were passed Preliminary or Introductory to an order or by-law concerning the stones, which seemed by those votes to be the thing designed, a vote for confirmation of what had passed

was called for; but it passed in the negative, and so the whole affair was brought to a non pluss. The other articles in the warrant were discoursed on but no vote passed thereon. After which some persons declaring their judgment that it was improper or at least unnecessary to Record the votes that had passed, seeing the things could not be effected; a vote was asked whether the votes that had passed should be put on Record, and it passed in the negative."

One Capt. Peter Adams had acted as moderator of this meeting in the absence of Major John Quincy, and it is apparent that he had not proved equal to the position. At the next town-meeting, held a month later, the question of dividing the town was brought up. It was voted to appoint a committee of eight to consider the subject, and to report at an adjourned meeting. Of this committee Major John Quincy was chairman, and upon it were several other prominent men. They presented their report on the 25th February following. It was unanimous and consisted of eight articles, looking apparently towards the proposed division. The reception it received was, considering the names that were attached to it, quite singular. The townsmen had evidently come to the meeting prepared to take the matter into their own hands. The report having been read before the meeting, the record proceeds as follows:—

"After which, upon a motion made the question was put whether the agreement of the committee should be voted article by article, and it passed in the negative.

"The question was then put whether all the articles thereof should be voted upon at once, it passed again in the negative.

"The Question was then again put whether they would accept of the Report of the said Committee. It passed again in the negative.

"After this, upon a motion made, the Question was put whether they would Reconsider their last vote, viz., of non-acceptance, and it was voted in the affirmative.

"Then again, the Question was put, whether they would accept of the Report of the Committee, and it passed in the negative.

"Upon which the meeting was dismissed."

At another town-meeting held in the following May the report was again brought up, and the question was put whether the town would reconsider its former action; and again it passed in the negative. It is almost needless to add that nothing more was heard on the subject of dividing the

town. The people having emphatically shown that they were not ready for it, the leaders, who seem to have worked the plan up, were compelled to drop it; and more than sixty years elapsed before the matter of division was revived in a practical form. In 1730 the warrant contained an article to see whether the town would "comply with a motion or desire of the House of Representatives (Recommended to all such as have a Regard to New Englands welfare) to raise money for the supply of Francis Wilks and Jonathan Belcher, Esqrs., agents for the said house in the Court of Great Britain to enable them to sollicite the affair and perpetuate the peace and tranquility of this country, and prevent the mischief, that is likely to ensue on the want thereof." The action of the town upon this matter showed that the leaders of public opinion had not lost their heads. The article was "discoursed upon, and the meeting being sensible that they could not (as a town) Raise money upon that Head, the thing was Dismissed and the Inhabitants left to subscribe as they pleased."

Col. John Quincy at this time became Speaker of the provincial House of Representatives, which was engaged in its long and tedious dispute with Governor Belcher over its right to audit public charges before money which had been appropriated should be paid out of the treasury. That Brain-tree fully sympathized in the stand taken by the representatives on this subject became manifest the following year, when the advice and direction of the several towns to their members was desired. At a special town-meeting held on the 27th of September, 1731, it was

"Then Voted, that the thanks of this meeting be Returned to the Honorable House of Representatives for their faithful service in asserting and defending the Just Liberties of this Province (as we esteem they have hither Done and which we highly approve) and Desire that they would continue strenuously to endeavour the maintaining and defending the same."

But the one matter which during this period seems to have stirred the town to its lowest depths was a controversy with Mr. Thomas Vinton, who in 1720 had purchased the land on which the Monatiquot Iron-works stood. The attempt to manufacture iron there had years before been finally aban-

doned as unprofitable; but the dam which furnished water-power was still standing, and it seems to have obstructed for no sufficient cause the passage of the alewives up the river during the spawning season. It is singular now in studying the course of earlier town-life on the Massachusetts sea-board, to notice the importance of the alewives. "Their annual return 'with such longing desire after the fresh-water ponds' — as an old chronicler writes — was the most important event of the year."¹ Long now unheard of and unthought of in Braintree, a century and a half ago these "historic fishes" not only vexed town-meetings, but because of them the whole community was wrought to such a pitch of excitement that it took the law into its own hands. There was never any other similar experience in the town's history. At last the matter was brought up by an article in the warrant for a town-meeting called for the 10th of March, 1636. The article read: — "To consider and determine on some effectual means of giving the Fish free passage up the River at the Iron works &c," and, after warm debate, a committee was appointed to treat with Mr. Vinton for the surrender of his rights. At a special meeting called a month later to receive the report of this committee, its chairman, Lieut. Joseph Crosby, stated verbally —

"That they had been with Mr. Thomas Vinton and had asked of him, on what terms he would quit his Claim to the River aforesaid, To which (they said) he made no answer, and Mr. Vinton being present at the meeting, The moderator [Benjamin Neal] put the Question to him, whether he would part with his Right in the River, To which he made answer, that he would not sell his Right therein on any terms whatsoever. The moderator then put the Question to the meeting whether they would defend their Rights in said River against the claims of all persons, whatsoever, It passed in the affirmative, against which John Hunt entered dissent. Then the Question was put Whether they would raise money to defrey the charge that may arise in defending their Rights, It passed in the affirmative, against which Ensign John Hunt and Benjamin Ludden dissented.

"Then Voted, That One Hundred Pounds shall be assessed on the Town (if need be) to defrey the charge of defending their Rights abovesaid.

"Then the Question was put, whether they would chuse a Committee To Take care that the River be kept clear of all obstructions to the passage

¹ Bliss, *Colonial Times on Buzzard's Bay*, 196-9.

of the Fish, and to prosecute in the Law all such as shall hinder or obstruct their passage in Said River. It passed in the affirmative."

The committee now appointed was especially authorized to submit the whole matter in dispute to a reference of "indifferent men," if Vinton would consent to so doing. He would come to no terms; and apparently the committee was afraid to do anything. In any event, their action certainly was not energetic enough to meet the views of the townsmen, and another meeting was held on the 23d of August. A vote was then passed that "all such things as obstruct the Passage in Monaticut River, in any part thereof be removed." It was further voted not to continue the former committee, nor to add to it other "meet Persons," but a wholly new committee was chosen, at the head of which was "The Honble. Leonard Vassal, Esq." This committee appears to have had recourse at once to high-handed measures. They pulled the dam down; thus summarily abating what the town regarded as a public nuisance, and an obstacle in the way of the enjoyment of a common benefit. In consequence of this action another town-meeting was held on the 14th of September, at which Mr. Benjamin Neal, a member of the committee, was chosen moderator. It was then voted that the committee should be empowered to defend all individuals against any action which Mr. Vinton might bring, "excepting any charg Mr. Vinton shall or may recover of any person or persons by making out a Riot."

Three weeks later still another special meeting was called, and a vote was passed offering Vinton three hundred pounds in bills of credit if he would quit-claim to the town all his right in the river, and discontinue legal proceedings against those who had been concerned in the pulling down of the dam. "Mr. Vinton being present, declared his acceptance of the Towns offer, and promised to comply with their demands, concerning a Deed of his Right in said River." It was then voted that, after the committee had done what they should see cause to do about clearing the river, Mr. Vinton should be at "liberty to take away the remainder of the stuff, at any time at his leisure."

Yet another meeting was held before this matter was fully

disposed of. There seems to have been a strong feeling that the town had dealt too liberally with Vinton. Accordingly, the meeting had hardly come to order and chosen its moderator when "Peter Marquand appeared and declared that he had no warning to the meeting, and therefore desired his descent might be entered against the meeting and all that might be therein Transacted." Nevertheless, the town proceeded to tax itself to the amount of the three hundred pounds which it had agreed to pay Mr. Vinton. But its action did not pass without a strong protest from the minority. No less than twenty-four persons insisted upon having their names recorded in opposition.

Not content with thus removing obstacles in the way of the passage of fish, the town a few years later tried its hand at the artificial development of an infant industry, thus foreshadowing the national protective policy of a century later. At the March meeting of 1755 a formal vote was passed for the encouragement of the "Bank Cod fishery to be sett up and carried on within this Town." Those concerned in this business, whether inhabitants of Braintree or elsewhere, were to have their poll-taxes remitted to them for the space of three years. A proviso was added that all such persons from other places should be subject to the approval of the selectmen; and, if not approved by them, might be "warned out of Town according to Law." Fortunately for the town, the bounty thus offered does not seem to have been sufficient to build up an artificial industry. Accordingly, as the years went by, the people were not drawn on from point to point in the singular process of taxing profitable industry to keep alive some industry which is not profitable.

In the record for the year 1757 there is a passage which shows in a curious way how thoroughly the parliamentary system had become a part of political habit. In the rough town-meeting they evinced as much respect for precedent as was shown at Westminster. They had their customs, with all the force of law. The question was on the election of selectmen. The record is as follows:—

"The votes being called for brot in and examined it appeared that Coll. Josiah Quincy, Mr. Jonathan Allen, Mr. Benjamin Porter were

chosen by a majority of votes, Capt. Richard Brackett and Capt. Eben Thayer, Junr., were chosen according to the usual custom of said Town as having more votes than any others, and were Declared Selectmen by the Moderator according to the custom of said Town. Upon which and much Dispute Respecting the Legallity of the aforesaid choice, Messrs. William Penniman, Samuel Bass, Peter Adams, Jonathan Rawson, Ebenezer Adams, John Adams, John Hunt, Samuel Bass, Junr., Josiah Capen, and John Clark Entered their Dissent against the proceedings of the said meeting. After much Debate Respecting the Legallity of Capt. Brackett and Capt. Thayers choice as Selectmen the Question was put by the Modr. whether the Town would then confirm said choice. Voted and passed in the affirmative."

The last struggle with the French and Indians was at this time already two years old. Braddock had been defeated before Fort Duquesne in July, 1755, and in May, 1756, war between Great Britain and France had been formally declared. Pitt was in office. The massacre at Fort George occurred in 1757; in 1758 Cape Breton was captured by the English, and on the 17th of September, 1759, Wolfe and Montcalm both fell on the Heights of Abraham. The next year the conquest of Canada by the English was complete. John Adams was then a young man, keeping school at Worcester; and he describes how Amherst with his little army of four thousand men passed through the town on their way from Louisburg to Crown Point: — "The officers were very social, spent their evenings and took their suppers with such of the inhabitants as were able to invite them, and entertained us with their music and their dances. Many of them were Scotchmen in their plaids, and their music was delightful; even the bag-pipe was not disagreeable." Then came the siege of Fort William Henry, during which almost every day couriers came down from the frontier bearing earnest appeals for men and supplies.

While the colony thus resounded with warlike preparations, Braintree pursued the absolutely even tenor of its ancient ways. In the records of the town there is no trace of these great events. The usual town-meetings were held, but even less than the usual interest attached to them. Questions of commons and ways were discussed, fines were imposed or remitted, schools were provided for, and from £60 to £150 was

annually ordered to be levied to meet current expenses; but of the stress of war in the form of calls for men, supplies and money there is no indication. Yet these must have come and been felt, and that severely, for a partial examination of the provincial muster-rolls has shown that between 1756 and 1760 more than two hundred Braintree men did military service. Some were impressed; the greater number volunteered. Twenty-eight took part in the unfortunate Crown Point expedition of 1756, serving during that season only. Hutchinson says that "when the main body of the enemy went back to Canada, the provincial army broke up and returned to the government in which it had been raised. Many had deserted and more had died while they lay encamped. Many died upon the road, and many died of the camp distemper after they were at home." Upon the rolls Joseph Blanchard, of Braintree, appears as a deserter.

The next year the capitulation of Fort William Henry to Montcalm and the subsequent massacre of its garrison by the savages spread a panic all through New England. Those living west of the Connecticut were ordered to destroy their wheel carriages and to drive in their cattle, while the authorities hoped to hold the line of that river. Nearly the whole military force of the colony was called to arms, and, from Braintree, Capt. Peter Thayer's company was marched as far as Roxbury. They lay there in camp for some days, and then, the alarm having subsided, returned home. Some seven or eight Braintree men are known to have been in the garrison of Fort William Henry at the time of the surrender.

The next year, in response to the strong, personal appeal of Pitt, Massachusetts put forth what she then supposed to be her utmost efforts. A levy of seven thousand men was ordered. Forty-five hundred only could be raised by voluntary enlistment, and the remainder had to be drafted. They composed part of the force which operated against Ticonderoga, and at their head Lord Howe was killed. Among them were at least thirty men from Braintree; and during the same season twelve more enlisted on the ship of war King George. The next year (1759) witnessed the fall of Quebec, and brought the war to a practical close. While Wolfe, with his

regulars, moved against Quebec, the provincial levies relieved the garrisons of Nova Scotia. To this force Braintree contributed a quota of some forty men, while more took part in the operations under Amherst which resulted in the fall of Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

The terms of enlistment during this war were short, and the name of the same man often appears more than once on the rolls. But during those three years it is probably safe to say that Braintree furnished, apart from the promenade of Capt. Thayer's company in August, 1757, one hundred different men for actual service. The population of the town was then about two thousand, of whom some five hundred were males above sixteen. From this it would appear that at least one man in each five of those belonging to the town, who, during the war, were capable of bearing arms, was put into the field.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REVOLUTIONARY EPOCH.

WITH the close of the French war a new generation came on the Braintree stage. The last recorded appearance of John Quincy at the town-meetings was in September, 1758, and the rebuff he then met with at the hands of his fellow-townsmen has already been noticed. Deacon John Adams, though a selectman in 1758, was not again chosen to that office, and he died two years later. But in 1761, though his name does not appear on the records, the younger John Adams has asserted that he was chosen surveyor of highways, and from this time forward his presence in the town made itself perceptibly felt. Upon the smaller stage it was just as it was on the larger one a little later. The active, inquiring mind was at work impelled by all the nervous energy of youth. Accordingly, in the town-meeting of May, 1761, we find the new John Adams engaged in his crusade against rum, persuading the town to regulate its licensed houses and restrict their number. Then in 1765 he induced it to abandon the old system of repairing highways, and to repair them in future by means of a tax levied for that purpose. A committee, of which he was a member, made a report outlining the new system. The old question about the commons is still undecided, and comes up in dreary shape before each succeeding town-meeting. A few years later he takes hold of it, and then at last the matter is disposed of. An apparently interminable discussion is brought to an end, and all the commons are sold.

Meanwhile new issues begin to take shape. The report in favor of selling the north commons was presented at the town-meeting of April 1, 1765, just ten days before Parliament passed the Stamp Act. When the news reached New England

it caused prodigious excitement everywhere. In Braintree John Adams took the matter up at once. He says, —

“I drew up a petition to the selectmen of Braintree, and procured it to be signed by a number of the respectable inhabitants, to call a meeting of the town to instruct their representative in relation to the stamps.”

The town met in the Middle Precinct meeting-house on the 24th of September. Norton Quincy was chosen moderator. Mr. Adams then goes on, —

“I prepared a draught of instructions at home and carried them with me. The cause of the meeting was explained at some length, and the state and danger of the country pointed out; a committee was appointed to prepare instructions, of which I was nominated as one. We retired to Mr. Niles’ house; my draught was produced, and unanimously adopted without amendment, reported to the town, and accepted without a dissenting voice. These were published in Draper’s paper, as that printer first applied to me for a copy. They were decided and spirited enough. They rang through the State and were adopted in so many words, as I was informed by the representatives of that year, by forty towns, as instructions to their representatives.”

These instructions were printed in the Boston Gazette of October 14, 1765, and in comparing them with some of an opposite nature coming at the same time from the town of Marblehead, a correspondent of the Evening Post picked out at the time one paragraph as “worthy to be wrote in letters of gold.” It was the following: —

“We further Recommend the most Clear and explicit assertion and vindication of our Rights and Liberties to be entered on the Public Records that the world may know in the Present and all future Generations, that we have a clear knowledge and a just sense of those Rights and Liberties and that with submission to devine Providence, we never can be slaves.”

As the Braintree instructions of September 24, 1765, then spread upon the records of the town, have been reprinted it is unnecessary to repeat them here, though the form in which they appear in the works of John Adams¹ is quite inaccurate when compared with the original.

It was certainly a vigorous, stirring production, well calculated to attract the public eye. There was in it an easy reference to the principles of English constitutional law which showed that the man who wrote it was master of his subject.

¹ John Adams, *Works*, iii. 465–8; *Braintree Records*, 404–5.

He appealed to Magna Charta, laying down the principle as "grand and fundamental," that "no freeman should be subject to any tax to which he has not given his own consent in person or by proxy." The courts of admiralty were then arraigned: —

"In these Courts one Judge presides alone! No Juries have any concern there! . . . What Justice and Impartiality are we at Three Thousand miles distance from the fountain to expect from such a Judge of Admiralty. We all along thought the Acts of Trade in this Respects a grievance. But the Stamp Act has erected a vast number of Sources of New Crimes which may be Committed by any man and cannot but be committed by multitudes and Prodigious Penalties all annexed and all these to be tried by such a Judge of such a Court. What can be wanting after this but a weak or wicked Man for a Judge to Render us the most sordid and forlorn of Slaves? We mean the slaves of a slave of the Servants of a Minister of State."

The authorship of this paper brought the young Braintree lawyer into popular prominence, and upon the 18th of the following December the town of Boston retained him to appear with Gridley and Otis before the Governor and Council in support of the memorial praying that the courts of law might be opened. It was a week later, on Christmas day, that he and his wife "drank tea at Grandfather Quincy's" at Mount Wollaston, and found the "old gentleman inquisitive about the hearing." A few days after, referring to the dangers of the times, he wrote in his diary, — "Let the towns and the representatives renounce every stamp man and every trimmer next May!" That slow and familiar process of popular education through which a whole people is gradually worked up to the war pitch was now going on. It was the same process in 1765 which had been witnessed in England one hundred and thirty years before, and which was again to be witnessed in America ninety years later, — a process through which, as the necessity for action becomes by degrees apparent, the spirit of conservatism, expressed through doubts and fears and efforts at compromise, is by degrees overcome. During the winter of 1765-6, young John Adams probably felt some anxiety in regard to the action of Braintree, for the North Precinct, he afterwards declared in a letter which has been printed, was at that time "a very focus of Episcopal

bigotry, intrigue, intolerance and persecution." The local Episcopal influence was certainly great, and one of its prominent representatives was on the board of selectmen. On the other hand, so intense was the popular feeling, that politics had now fairly taken possession of the orthodox Massachusetts pulpit. For instance, the Rev. Ebenezer Gay, of Hingham, had preached a Thanksgiving sermon in which he inculcated distinctly submission to authority and a recourse to "prayers and tears, not clubs." This discourse greatly disturbed the Hingham people, who persuaded themselves that their worthy pastor had the stamps in his house, and they even threatened to go and search it for them. The feeling was not allayed when, the next Sabbath, Parson Smith, of Weymouth, preached a sermon in the Hingham pulpit in which he recommended obedience to good rules and a spirited opposition to bad ones, interspersed with a good deal of animated declamation upon liberty and the times. A month later Parson Wibird alarmed his parishioners by announcing the following as the text of his discourse:—"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." John Adams goes on:—

"I began to suspect a Tory sermon on the times from this text, but the preacher confined himself to spirituals. But, I expect, if the tories should become the strongest, we shall hear many sermons against the ingratitude, injustice, disloyalty, treason, rebellion, impiety, and ill policy of refusing obedience to the Stamp Act. The church clergy, to be sure, will be very eloquent."

Major Miller was then one of the board of selectmen. The Millers, the Veaseys, and the Cleverlys were all churchmen, and their names will presently be found in the town records as those of political "suspects;" but none the less we get from John Adams' diary not unpleasant glimpses of those thus composing a little knot of Church of England loyalists and conservatives in a Massachusetts country town of the pre-revolutionary period. Here, for instance, is a pen-and-ink sketch of him who was subsequently the Teacher of the deserted and fallen church:—

"December 26, 1758. Tuesday. Being the evening after Christmas, the Doctor [Savil] and I spent the evening with Mr. Cleverly and Major

Miller. Mr. Cleverly was cheerful, alert, sociable and complaisant ; so much good sense and knowledge, so much good humor and contentment, and so much poverty, are not to be found in any other house, I believe, in this province. I am amazed that a man of his ingenuity and sprightliness can be so shiftless."

And again, at the time of the resistance to the Stamp Act :

"December 29, 1765. Sunday. The church people are, many of them, favorers of the Stamp Act at present. Major Miller, forsooth, is very fearful that they will be *stomachful* at home, and angry and resentful. Mr. Veasey insists upon it, that we ought to pay our proportion of the public burdens. Mr. Cleverly is fully convinced that they, that is Parliament, have a right to tax us ; he thinks it is wrong to go on with business ; we had better stop and wait till Spring, till we hear from home. He says we [the patriots] put the best face upon it ; that letters have been received in Boston, from the greatest merchants in the nation, blaming our proceedings, and that the merchants don't second us. . . . He says that things go on here exactly as they did in the reign of King Charles I., 'that blessed saint and martyr.' "

Then a few days later : —

"January 10, 1766. Friday. Mr. Cleverly here in the evening. He says he is not so clear as he was that the Parliament has a right to tax us ; he rather thinks it has not. Thus the contagion of the times has caught even that bigot to passive obedience and non-resistance ; it has made him waver. It is almost the first time I ever knew him converted, or even brought to doubt and hesitate about any of his favorite points, — as the authority of Parliament to tax us was one. Nay, he used to assert positively that the King was as absolute in the plantations as the Great Turk in his dominions."

As the day in March approached when town officers for 1766-7 were to be chosen, Braintree was alive with excitement and intrigue. The church party was anxious not to lose the degree of influence it still had, and its members accordingly professed to have seen new light. This fully accounted for the fact that Mr. Cleverly was not so clear as he had been that Parliament had a right to tax the colonies ; and, indeed, was inclined to think it had not. For selectmen the Episcopal faction proposed a combination ticket, — Colonel Josiah Quincy and Major Ebenezer Miller, the former being a stanch patriot. At last the day for the town-meeting came, and John Adams, who long afterwards spoke of it as "the first popular struggle of the Revolution in the town of Braintree," thus at the moment described what took place : —

"My brother Peter, Mr. Etter, and Mr. Field, having a number of votes prepared for Mr. Quincy and me, set themselves to scatter them. The town had been very silent and still, my name had never been mentioned, nor had our friends ever talked of any new selectmen at all, excepting in the South Precinct; but as soon as they found there was an attempt to be made they fell in and assisted, and although there were six different hats with votes for as many different persons, besides a considerable number of scattering votes, I had the major vote of the assembly the first time. Mr. Quincy had more than one hundred and sixty votes. I had but one vote more than half. . . . Etter and my brother took a skillful method. . . . Many persons, I hear, acted slyly and deceitfully; this is always the case. . . . Mr. Jo. Bass was extremely sorry for the loss of Major Miller; he would never come to another meeting. Mr. Jo. Cleverly could not account for many things done at town-meetings."

This was the meeting at which the popular party achieved only a partial victory, owing to the fact that "the north end people," after voting for "Cornet Bass" once, "withdrew for refreshment," and during their absence in the bar of Ebenezer Thayer's tavern, just across the road, another vote was taken and their candidate defeated. A fortnight later, on the 18th of March, the newly chosen selectmen met Major Miller, who, though a Tory then and afterwards, was a worthy man and useful member of his church and town. The successful candidate gave this account of the interview:—

"Went to Weymouth; . . . on my return stopped at Mr. Jo. Bass's for the papers. [This was the tavern at the centre of the North Precinct.] Major Miller soon afterwards came in, and he and I looked on each other without wrath or shame or guilt, at least without any great degree of either, though I must own I did not feel exactly as I used to in his company, and I am sure by his face and eyes that he did not in mine. We were very social, etc."

Six weeks later Mr. Adams wrote:—

"May 4. Sunday. Returning from meeting this morning, I saw for the first time a likely young buttonwood tree, lately planted on the triangle made by the three roads, by the house of Mr. James Bracket. The tree is well set, well guarded, and has on it an inscription, 'The Tree of Liberty, and cursed is he who cuts this tree!' . . . I never heard a hint of it till I saw it, but I hear that some persons grumble, and threaten to girdle it."¹

Planted at a point almost exactly midway between the site

¹ The site of the tree was close to where Christ Church in Quincy now stands. Pattee, 378.

of the old stone meeting-house of the previous century and the place where Christ Church then stood, — a point where the Plymouth road, winding Boston-ward, turned sharply to the north, and was joined by the town-way leading to the landing on the river, — a more prominent spot on which to put a Liberty Tree could not have been selected in Braintree. John Adams must have passed it each Sabbath as he walked or drove with his young, just married wife from the old dwelling at the foot of Penn's Hill to the meeting-house, going by the door of the Episcopal church, and shortly before he came to Bracket's tavern. Whether that "likely young button-wood" remained there and thrived, or, neglected during the troubled years that ensued, was allowed to languish and die, does not appear. No other mention of it is recorded; and, so long ago that no tradition of it lingers, it vanished away from what is now the busy centre at which four crowded thoroughfares meet.

On the 16th of May, 1766, news of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached Boston and was the cause of general rejoicing. For some reason the event was not noticed in Braintree, which John Adams pronounced "insensible to the common joy," declaring that a duller day he did not remember to have passed. Yet there was a town-meeting held, and Ebenezer Thayer was chosen representative. Two more town-meetings were held that year, at each of which the question of granting compensation from the treasury of the province to the sufferers by the August riots of 1765 in Boston came up for discussion. Like many other towns, Weymouth for instance, Braintree at first instructed its representative to vote against the proposed indemnity. The inhabitants desired "att all times to bear their testimony against such unlawful and abusive practices, but as they were in no wise accessary to the mischief committed they do not judge they can be justly charged with the Damages." At another meeting, held in December, Mr. Thayer was instructed to vote for indemnity. The record of this meeting would also seem to indicate that the new method of repairing the ways by tax had not yet worked a full measure of reform; for the town petitioned to be relieved from a fine of ten pounds imposed upon it by the Superior Court "for not keeping their roads in repair."

In the following March, Norton Quincy and John Adams were again elected selectmen, and Major Miller appears at the head of the fence-viewers and surveyors of highways; but the next year John Adams, who was then in active law practice in Boston, asked to be excused from further service. Not only did the town excuse him, but it passed a formal vote thanking him "for his services as selectman for two years past." There is no other case of such a vote of thanks, and the occasion for it does not appear. Mr. Adams may have declined to receive pay for his services; but if he did, the fact was not stated. Though fast rising into professional eminence, he was at the time a man of only thirty, and there seems no reason why a town which for generations had seen colonels and judges and counselors serving it as selectmen should have been especially grateful to the son of Deacon Adams because he filled for a brief period the office to which his father had been thirteen times elected. It would seem probable, therefore, his services were, for reasons which do not now appear, known to have been of peculiar value.

After the repeal of the Stamp Act there was a lull in political agitation. Yet the troubled waters did not grow wholly calm before, in 1767, Parliament passed the Import Act. The popular alarm over this measure is next reflected in the record of town-meetings, and the warrant for that in Braintree at which John Adams declined reelection as selectman contained an article for the town to agree upon "some effectual Method to promote Economy, Industry and Manufactures, thereby to prevent the unnecessary importation of European commodities, which threaten the country with poverty and Ruin." This article of the warrant was referred to a committee which reported at once that, in view of the decay of trade, the scarcity of money and the heavy public debt, the town should use its utmost endeavors towards the suppression of extravagance, idleness and vice, and to promote industry, economy and good morals.

"And in order to prevent the unnecessary exportation of money, of which this Province has of late been so much drained, it is further voted, that this Town will, by all prudent means discontinue the use of foreign Superfluities and encourage the Manufactures of this Province, and particularly, those of this Town."

This was in March, 1768, and a few months later the rumor crept abroad that regiments of British soldiers were to be brought from Halifax and Ireland to overawe the Massachusetts colony. Boston again took the lead in agitation, and a formal committee from its town-meeting waited on Governor Barnard, asking, in view of the well-authenticated character of the rumor, that the General Court should be called together. It was not supposed that this request would be complied with; but the refusal to comply with it gave the popular leaders a pretext for taking the next step to which they now saw their way, and the town of Boston, by circular letters invited all the other towns to choose delegates to a convention. As Hutchinson said, this act "had a greater tendency towards a revolution in government than any preceding measure in any of the colonies. The inhabitants of one town alone took upon them to convene an assembly from all the towns, that, in everything but in name, would be a house of representatives." This was the exact state of the case. The appeal was direct to the New England town system. In that system, acting through town-meetings called in a strictly legal way, the popular leaders saw the material for a complete political organization. The units being of one mind, the way was open to a reorganization of the whole, and the slow growth of a hundred and thirty years was now to produce its results in a moment. Without having recourse to any suddenly improvised political machinery, with no noise or confusion, but acting quietly through their accustomed local organizations, the people of Massachusetts were in the most natural manner conceivable about to take the management of their affairs into their own hands.

In this work Braintree only did its share. John Adams had removed to Boston, and was now busy with his law books; though both this year and the year after he drew up the Boston instructions to its representatives. When the Braintree town-meeting was held, on the 26th of September, Colonel Josiah Quincy and Ebenezer Thayer were chosen to represent the town in the proposed convention. A letter of instructions to them was at the same meeting read and approved, and ordered to be spread on the records, two pages of which are covered by it.

These instructions — and during this period many of them are to be found in the records of the towns — are no longer interesting reading. They relate to issues long since decided, and set forth principles which few now care to dispute ; but historically they are of the utmost value. Generally well written, though in the somewhat turgid style of the day, they almost always show a clear idea in the mind of him who prepared the paper not only of what was wanted, but of the means through which it was proposed to get it. That such papers should have emanated at once from so many towns in the province shows the generally high standard of political thought which then prevailed. Nor were these papers the work of a few leaders in advance of the people. The whole popular column was moving together. The instructions, prepared by committees, were read, discussed and understood in town-meeting. Those of Weymouth were cast in the same mould as those of Braintree. It was one voice, and it emitted no uncertain sound. It was the voice of an intelligent people moving by an accustomed path towards a given end which they distinctly saw. Hence there was nothing strange, irregular or mob-like in their action. Even when engaged in a revolution they elaborately argued every measure, and took each new step in careful conformity with law and precedent.

Between September, 1765, and September, 1776, there are seven of these state papers, as they may properly be called, entered at length on the Braintree records, filling eighteen closely-written folio pages. The town instructions to its representative in relation to the Stamp Act come first in the series ; the last in it is the Declaration of Independence. Between these are the instructions to Colonel Quincy and Ebenezer Thayer, delegates to the Boston convention of September, 1768 ; the resolutions of March 1, 1773, in response to the circular report of the committee of correspondence of the Boston town-meeting of October 28, 1772 ; the report and resolves on taxation without representation of March 11, 1774 ; the brief instructions of January 23, 1775, to Deacon Joseph Palmer, town delegate to the Provincial Congress held at Cambridge ; and, March 15th, the full covenant for

non-importation, non-consumption and non-exportation then recommended by the Continental Congress.

Of these several papers, the resolves of March 1, 1773, are the most noticeable. They appear to have been drawn by General and Deacon Palmer, an active freeman of the town, who then and for several years after was prominent in the North Precinct. Though born in England, and emigrating at thirty years of age, General Palmer was an ardent patriot, and in 1774 represented Braintree in the Provincial Congress. He was at the head of the committee to which was referred the famous November, 1772, report of the Boston committee of correspondence, prepared by Samuel Adams and James Warren, of which Governor Hutchinson wrote, its "whole frame was calculated to strike the colonists with a sense of their just claim to independence, and to stimulate them to assert it." In referring to the responses to this report, the same authority says, — "The votes of some of the towns were very high and inflammatory."¹ Perhaps he so classed those of Braintree, which, though they began in a measured way, were certainly explicit, and clearly revealed the advance of public opinion. From them to a declaration of political independence was but one step, and not a long one. Yet these resolves were passed more than two years before the fight at Concord bridge. They were in these words: —

"We, your Committee, &c., report, —

"1st. That we apprehend the state of the rights of the colonists, and of this Province in particular, together with a list of the infringements and violations of those rights, as stated in the Pamphlets committed to us, are in general fairly represented, and that the town of Boston be hereby thanked for this instance of their extraordinary care of the public welfare.

"2d. That all taxations, by what name soever called, imposed upon us without our consent by any earthly power, are unconstitutional, oppressive, and tend to enslave us.

"3d. That as our Fathers left their native Country and Friends in order that they and their Posterity might enjoy that civil and religious Liberty here which they could not enjoy there, we, their descendants, are determined by the grace of God that our consciences shall not accuse us with having acted unworthy such pious and venerable Heroes, and that we will, by all Lawful ways and means, preserve at all events all our civil and religious rights and privileges.

¹ *History*, iii. 366, 369; Frothingham, *Rise of the Republic*, ch. vii.

"4th. That by the divine constitution of things there is such a connection between civil and religious Liberty, that in whatever nation or government the one is crushed the other seldom or ever survives long after. Of this History furnishes abundant evidence.

"5th. That all Civil officers are, or ought to be, Servants to the people, and dependent upon them for their official support; and every instance to the contrary, from the Governor downward, tends to crush and destroy civil liberty.

"6th. That we bear true loyalty to our Lawful king, George the 3d, and unfeigned affection to our Brethren in Great Brittain and Ireland, and to all our Sister Colonies, and so long as our mother-country protects us in our Charter rights and privileges, so long will we, by divine assistance, exert our utmost to promote the welfare of the whole British Empire, which we earnestly pray may flourish uninterruptedly in the paths of righteousness till time shall be no more.

"7th. That Mr. Thayer, our Representative, be directed, and he hereby is directed, to use his utmost endeavors that a Day of Fasting and Prayer be appointed throughout the Province for humbling ourselves before God in this day of darkness, and imploring divine direction and assistance."

Events now moved rapidly. On the 18th of the following December, the tea was thrown into the docks of Boston, Deacon Palmer's son from Braintree aiding in the work. On the 1st of the following June, Governor Hutchinson sailed away into life-long exile, and the same day the Boston Port Bill went into effect. During June also the General Court appointed five delegates to represent the province in the first Continental Congress; and August 10th, John Adams set off with his colleagues for Philadelphia, having previously moved his wife and family back to Braintree from their home in Queen Street, Boston. On the 22d of August Braintree appointed Deacon Palmer, Colonel Thayer and Captain Penniman its delegates to the county convention, and likewise its committee of correspondence; a larger body of six, at the head of which was Norton Quincy, was likewise instructed to act as a sort of committee of public safety.

For this latter committee there was then supposed to be special need in Braintree. The town powder was stored in a small building on the common in the North Precinct, and some anxiety was felt as to its safety. Owing to the presence of the Church of England people, the North Precinct was looked upon as a Tory hot-bed. Party feeling there certainly ran high, "and very hard words and threats of blows upon

both sides were given out." In the course of the month of September, General Gage sent two companies of soldiers over to Charlestown, and secured some ammunition stored there. This led to a tumultuous gathering next day at Cambridge, and the excitement soon spread through the neighboring towns. Mrs. John Adams then tells the story of what occurred in Braintree:—

"The report took here on Friday, and on Sunday a soldier was seen lurking about the Common, supposed to be a spy, but most likely a deserter. However, intelligence of it was communicated to the other parishes, and about eight o'clock Sunday evening there passed by here about two hundred men, preceded by a horse-cart, and marched down to the powder-house, from whence they took the powder, and carried it into the other parish, and there secreted it. I opened the window upon their return. They passed without any noise, not a word among them until they came against this house, when some of them, perceiving me, asked me if I wanted any powder. I replied, 'No, since it is in such good hands.' The reason they gave for taking it was that we had so many Tories here they dared not trust us with it; they had taken Vinton¹ in their train, and upon their return they stopped between Cleverly's and Etter's and called upon him to deliver two warrants. Upon his producing them, they put it to vote whether they should burn them, and it passed in the affirmative. They then made a circle and burnt them. They then called a vote whether they should huzza, but, it being Sunday evening, it passed in the negative. They called upon Vinton to swear that he would never be instrumental in carrying into execution any of these new acts. They were not satisfied with his answers; however, they let him rest. A few days afterwards, upon his making some foolish speeches, they assembled to the amount of two or three hundred, and swore vengeance upon him unless he took a solemn oath. Accordingly, they chose a committee and sent it with him to Major Miller's to see that he complied; and they waited his return, which, proving satisfactory, they dispersed. This town appears as high as you can well imagine, and, if, necessary, would soon be in arms. Not a

¹ The Vinton here mentioned was Captain John Vinton, of Braintree Middle Precinct. He was then deputy sheriff, and as such had in his hands a number of the newly-issued warrants for summoning juries, in pursuance of the act of Parliament for new modelling the government of Massachusetts. Though an official under the colonial government, John Vinton was at a later time an earnest patriot, and held a commission in the Revolutionary army. (*Vinton Memorial*, 57-61.) Joseph Cleverly and Peter Etter, both members of the Braintree Episcopal church (*supra*, 219-20), lived on the old Plymouth road, near Penn's Hill, and were accordingly near neighbors of Mrs. Adams. It has already been seen (*supra*, 221) that Etter was a warm political friend of John Adams.

Tory but hides his head. The Church parson thought they were coming after him, and ran up garret; they say another jumped out of his window and hid among the corn, whilst a third crept under a board fence and told his beads."

The powder was removed on Sunday, September 4th, and the alarm caused among the church people by such proceedings was naturally great. Their sympathizers were almost wholly confined to Boston, and accordingly exaggerated rumors soon began to get currency there of the dangers to which Mr. Winslow and the members of the Braintree society were exposed. Lexington and Concord were still six months in the future, and public feeling had not yet reached the pitch of intolerance to which it subsequently rose; accordingly these rumors so scandalized the law-abiding sentiment of Braintree, that early in October the matter was brought to the notice of an adjourned town-meeting. The following preamble and vote were then passed: —

"WHEREAS, a report has been spread in the Town of Boston and other places that a considerable Number of People in this Town had entered into a combination to Disturb and harrass the Reverend Mr. Winslow and other Members of the church of England, with a letter to oblige them to leave the Town, And no evidence appearing to Support the charge, Therefore

"Voted, That said report is Malicious, false and injurious, and calculated to defame this Town, and that We protest against all such combinations as being subversive of good Government, We being as ready to allow that right of private judgment to others which we claim for ourselves.

"Voted, The relation Mr. Peter Etter made respecting his conduct is satisfactory to the Town."

Peter Etter was a German by extraction, and one of the company that undertook the development of glass-works in Braintree in 1752. He continued to be an inhabitant of the town after that enterprise failed, and took an active part in public affairs. Though apparently a churchman, he seems to have been on excellent social and political terms with John Adams, who used, with his wife, to take tea with him; and apparently it was well known in the town that on public issues Mr. Etter did not sympathize with his rector. It was not so with all. Major Miller evidently stood well with his townsmen. He had served acceptably in many offices, and

was on the board of selectmen as late as 1772. But he belonged to the church and the gentry, — the class of the Apthorps, Borlands and Vassalls, — and at the very meeting which passed the votes just quoted all persons in the town who felt “aggrieved by the conduct of others respecting our public affairs” were enjoined to go to a committee of observation, then appointed, who were “desired, if possible, to remove the grounds of uneasiness (if real), and direct all inquiries.”

Three years passed away before the persecution of the Tories in Braintree became open and pronounced, and during the intervening time they were certainly treated with no little forbearance. Even after the Declaration of Independence had been read from the North Precinct pulpit and entered in the records of the town, Mrs. Adams, on the 29th of September, 1776, wrote to her husband: — “The church is opened here every Sunday, and the king prayed for, as usual, in open defiance of Congress.” In reply, he expressed his surprise at “prayers in public for an abdicated king,” and declared that nothing of the kind was heard anywhere in the country except New York and Braintree. “This practice,” he added, “is treason against the State, and cannot be long tolerated.” Outwardly, and in other respects, Mr. Winslow was probably more discreet, but it has already been observed that he felt bound by his ordination oath to conform literally to the ritual; and he did so, until at last the long-suppressed popular feeling found open expression. In June, 1777, a town-meeting was called for the purpose of agreeing upon a list of those persons dwelling in Braintree who were “esteemed inimical” to the popular cause. The selectmen presented the following names: — Rev. Edward Winslow, Major Ebenezer Miller, John Cheesman, Joseph Cleverly, James Apthorp, William Veazie, Benjamin Cleverly, Oliver Gay and Nedabiah Bent. Some other names were on motion added: — Joseph Cleverly (second), William Veazie, Jr., Henry Cleverly and Thomas Brackett. All of these persons it was then voted were “esteemed inimical,” and William Penniman was chosen to procure evidence of their disloyalty and lay it before the court.

The coming event had cast its shadow before, and on the 2d of April, Mrs. Adams wrote: — “The Church doors were

shut up last Sunday in consequence of a presentiment; a farewell sermon preached and much weeping and wailing; persecuted, be sure, but not for righteousness' sake." The action of the town two months later was in the nature of a formal indictment of the whole society, for among the names of those recorded as "inimical" were its rector, its wardens and all its leading members. Yet Mr. Winslow alone would seem to have left the town, following the British army to New York. In any event his occupation in Braintree was gone. Against the other members of the society proceedings do not seem to have been pressed, and afterwards they all became good citizens of the United States, their names again appearing in the Braintree and Quincy records, and, at last, on the stones in the little Episcopal grave-yard.¹ Later a certain amount of property in Braintree was seized and sold because of Tory ownership, but it belonged chiefly to non-residents. Thus the Tory persecution in Braintree, though it unquestionably made the lives of those suspected miserable enough at the time, seems, so far as actual residents in the town were concerned, to have resulted only in the expatriation of Samuel Quincy and the Rev. Edward Winslow. The other suspects, quietly accepting the situation, made the best of it; and, as is not unusual in such cases, found it in the close far less unendurable than, doubtless, they had gloomily anticipated.

Returning to the autumn of 1774, after the seizure of the powder on the 4th of September Braintree was alive with rumors and military preparation. On her way home from a visit to Salem, Mrs. Adams stopped at her house in Boston, and thence wrote to her husband on September 24th: —

" 'In time of peace prepare for war' (if this may be called a time of peace) resounds throughout the country. Next Tuesday they are warned at Braintree, all above fifteen and under sixty, to attend with their arms; and to train once a fortnight from that time is a scheme which lies much at heart with many."

She then goes on to speak of a conspiracy among the negroes in Boston, which, it was supposed, had just been discovered, and she adds, —

¹ Pattee, 141-5.

"There is but little said, and what steps they will take in consequence of it I know not. I wish most sincerely there was not a slave in the province ; it always appeared a most iniquitous scheme to me to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have. You know my mind on this subject."

In the form of covenant "very unanimously" adopted in the Braintree town-meeting of 15th March following the date of this letter there appears this clause, —

"We will neither import, or purchase any slave imported since the first day of December last, and will wholly discontinue the slave trade ; and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it."

The two utterances taken together are significant, for Mr. Adams had returned from Philadelphia in October, 1774, and it was he, doubtless, who draughted the covenant. Immediately on his getting back to Braintree the town had chosen him as an additional delegate to the Provincial Congress, Messrs. Thayer and Palmer having been previously elected. He had passed the winter at home, and as soon as the covenant was adopted he came forward with another report as chairman of a committee on minute-men. It was voted to raise three companies, one in each precinct, to be composed of forty-one men each, including officers. Provision had already been made in January for military drill, and payment for attendance thereat ; and now the minute-men in prompt attendance were to receive "one shilling and four pence per day for one day in every week, and the selectmen were directed to supply the officers of the three companies with money to pay off said men day by day ;" and if there were no funds in the treasury they were to borrow on the town's credit. The affair of Lexington and Concord occurred on the 19th of April, and on the 24th the adjourned town-meeting directed the selectmen to "dismiss Mr. Rice, their Grammar School master as soon as their present engagements are expired." Evidently it was thought there was no money for anything but men and munitions ; and ten days later Mrs. Adams wrote to her husband : — "Mr. Rice is going into the army as captain of a company. We have no school. I know not what to do with John." This John was her oldest son, John Quincy, then a

boy of seven, who, eighteen months later, she again refers to as having "become post-rider from Boston to Braintree."

It was the general belief, after the affair of Lexington and Concord had so tightened the lines about Boston, that the need of supplies would oblige General Gage to send out boat parties along the shore under protection of the fleet. As one of the salt-water neighborhoods, the North Precinct was accordingly in great and perpetual terror of forays. On the 4th of May, Mrs. Adams wrote:—"There has been no descent upon the sea-coast. Guards are regularly kept." The widow of Josiah Quincy, Jr., who had died only a few weeks before, was then at the house of her father-in-law in the North Precinct,—the house, already referred to, in which President Josiah Quincy, of Harvard College, subsequently lived and died. On Saturday, April 29th, Mrs. Adams went to see her there, "and in the afternoon, from an alarm they had she and her sister with three others of the family, took refuge with [Mrs. Adams] and tarried all night." A little later Colonel Quincy arranged with Deacon Holbrook, of the Middle Precinct, for a place of retreat, if he needed one; and Mr. Cranch, who lived at Germantown, did the same with Major Bass. Mrs. Adams herself secured a refuge at the house of her husband's brother.

So things went on from day to day, the now inevitable conflict drawing always nearer. At last, on Sunday morning, May 21, Braintree had a veritable alarm,—the enemy was actually at its door. Three sloops and a cutter had come out from Boston harbor and dropped anchor in Weymouth fore-river, not far from Germantown. Before six o'clock alarm-guns were heard, and shortly after the bells began to ring. Then the minute-men fell in at tap of drum on the training-field. The panic was great, especially in Weymouth, and men, women and children came flocking over the Plymouth road and down Penn's Hill to Braintree. The wildest rumors were circulated. Three hundred men had been landed! They were marching into Weymouth village! They were coming to Germantown! Meanwhile the companies of minute-men came rapidly in, showing sufficiently well what a hornet's nest the region was. They came from distances of

twenty miles and more, but those from Braintree were naturally among the first on the ground. Elihu Adams, a younger son of Deacon John Adams, and who afterwards died of dysentery contracted in camp during the siege of Boston, was in command of the Braintree company, and also one of the party which went out to drive the marauders away from Sheep Island, where they were foraging. This they succeeded in doing without loss to themselves.

Through all these events Mrs. Adams wrote that her house, being on the main road, was a scene of lasting confusion. "Soldiers coming in for a lodging, for breakfast, for supper, for drink, etc. Sometimes refugees from Boston, tired and fatigued, seek an asylum for a day, a night, a week." Meanwhile her husband was writing: — "Let me caution you, my dear, to be upon your guard against the multitude of affrights and alarms which, I fear, will surround you;" but a little later he exclaims, — "Oh, that I were a soldier! I will be! I am reading military books. Everybody must, and will, and shall be a soldier!"

All this was in May. At last, on the morning of Saturday, June 17th, a heavy cannonading to the northward awoke the town at early dawn. The British ships of war in Boston Harbor were firing at the breastwork which had been thrown up the night before on the crest of Bunker's Hill. The only records which have come down to us showing how that day was passed by those dwelling in Braintree are found in a letter from Mrs. Adams to her husband and in the later recollections of her son.¹ Restless with excitement and suspense, unable to shut out the noise of the distant cannon, the mother, then a woman of a little more than thirty, taking with her the child of eight, went out to the neighboring Penn's Hill, and, climbing to its summit, looked towards Boston. It was a clear June day of intense heat, and across the blue bay they saw, against the horizon, the dense black volume of smoke which rolled away from the burning houses of Charlestown. Over the crest of the distant hill hung the white clouds which told of the battle going on beneath the smoke. There was withal something quite dramatic in the scene; for, as the two

¹ *Memoir of Eliza S. M. Quincy*, 209.

sat there silent and trembling, the child's hand clasped in that of the mother, thinking now of what was taking place before their eyes, and now of the husband and father so far away at the Congress, they dreamed not at all of the great future for him and for the boy to be surely worked out in that conflict, the first pitched battle of which was then being fought before them.

The next day, Sunday, the mother wrote, —

"The battle began upon our intrenchments upon Bunker's Hill Saturday morning, about three o'clock, and has not ceased yet, and it is now three o'clock Sabbath afternoon. Charlestown is laid in ashes. It is expected they will come out over the Neck to-night, and a dreadful battle must ensue. Almighty God, cover the heads of our countrymen, and be a shield to our dear friends! How many have fallen we know not. The constant roar of the cannon is so distressing that we cannot eat, drink, or sleep. My bursting heart must find vent at my pen. 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto his people. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us.'"

There were no services held that Sunday in the North Precinct church, nor had there been on the Sunday before. "They delight in molesting us on the Sabbath," wrote Mrs. Adams. But at last, on the 25th of June, "we have sat under our own vine in quietness; have heard Mr. Taft. The good man was earnest and pathetic; I could forgive his weakness for the sake of his sincerity." Nor did her own pastor fully meet the spiritual needs of this lady, for presently she speaks of him as "our inanimate old bachelor," whom she "could not bear to hear;" and then says that he "made the best oration (he never prays, you know) I ever heard from him." Two companies of soldiers were now stationed in the town, — that of Captain Turner, at Germantown, and that of Captain Vinton, at Squantum. Presently they were engaged in small affairs in the harbor; but, before this, their presence led to a town-meeting episode which showed how the lessons of history were ingrained in the people. The descendants of the Puritans bore freshly in memory the fact that Cromwell had with his soldiery dispersed the Long Parliament. The town was to choose a representative. Colonel Palmer and Mr. Thayer, dwelling in different precincts, were opposing

candidates, and Captain Vinton's company was largely composed of men from Mr. Thayer's precinct. The meeting was held on the 12th of July, and again Mrs. Adams tells what took place : —

“ Colonel Palmer is the man. There was a considerable muster upon Thayer's side, and Vinton's company marched up in order to assist, but got sadly disappointed. Newcomb insisted upon it that no man should vote who was in the army. He had no notion of being under the military power ; said we might be so situated as to have the greater part of the people engaged in the military, and then all power would be wrested out of the hands of the civil magistrate. He insisted upon its being put to vote, and carried his point immediately.”

During the night of the 9th of July a body of three hundred volunteers put out in whale-boats from Germantown and crossed over to Long Island, where they seized some cattle, sheep and prisoners, and brought them off without being discovered from the vessels lying near. Their emulation being fired by this achievement, a few days later another party put off from Moon Island, opposite Squantum, in open day, and fired the house and barn which the previous party had spared. Though exposed to a sharp fire from the enemy's ships, the whole force returned in safety, and only one of the covering party on the Moon was killed. Then all the companies guarding the south side of the bay were ordered to go to Nantasket, and cut and bring away the ripened grain. While there, and under the eyes of several men-of-war, they crossed over in their whale-boats and set fire to the light-house. Returning, they were fired upon and pursued, but got back without loss. General Gage thereupon sent a force of carpenters, under guard of thirty marines, to repair the building, and caused a new lamp to be set up. In consequence of this, on Sunday evening, the 29th, a body of men went off from Squantum in the whale-boats, surprised and overcame the guard, killing the lieutenant in command and one man, and completely destroyed the buildings. Returning with their prisoners they were hotly pursued, but escaped with the loss of one man killed ; who, two days after, was buried from Germantown. These were the only military operations undertaken from Quincy Bay during the siege of

Boston; and though, as Mrs. Adams wrote, they were in themselves but trifling affairs, yet they served "to inure our men and harden them to danger."

The summer was hot and dry. There was meat to be had in abundance, but at one time it seemed probable the corn crop would prove a failure, and famine might thus be added to war. Tea, coffee and sugar became very scarce, but "whortleberries and milk we are not obliged to commerce for." The camps about Boston, swarming with raw, untrained levies, were not properly policed, nor were the food and mode of life such as the men were accustomed to. As a matter of course sickness ensued. The state of continual excitement and alarm in which the people of the neighboring towns had long been living naturally predisposed them to disease, and when the camp sickness took the form of dysentery it soon became epidemic and spread rapidly. Then followed some weeks of terrible trial. It was a time of pestilence. In Braintree Mr. Wibird was stricken down, and all through August and September the Sabbath services were not observed. There was almost no house which did not count some dead; and two, three, and even four funerals would take place in a day.

"The small-pox in the natural way was not more mortal than this distemper has proved in this and many neighboring towns. . . . Mrs. Randall has lost her daughter. Mrs. Bracket hers. Mr. Thomas Thayer his wife. I know of eight this week who have been buried in this town. . . . In six weeks I count five of my near connections laid in the grave. . . . And such is the distress of the neighborhood that I can scarcely find a well person to assist in looking after the sick. Mr. Wibird lies bad, Major Miller is dangerous, and Mr. Gay is not expected to live. . . . We have fevers of various kinds, the throat distemper, as well as the dysentery prevailing in this and the neighboring towns. . . . Sickness and death are in almost every family. I have no more shocking and terrible idea of any distemper, except the plague, than this. . . . So mortal a time the oldest man does not remember."

So wrote Mrs. Adams to her husband. His brother Elihu, who had just taken a commission in the army, was among the earliest victims. Returning home at that time, John Adams had started back to Philadelphia on the 26th of August, and between that day and the 8th of September there

were eighteen persons buried in the Middle Precinct alone. The disease was supposed to be contagious, so that watchers and nurses could be obtained only with difficulty, and the sustained physical strain upon the well soon made them sick. Mrs. Adams' own house was a hospital. A servant was first taken down; she herself was then seized; another servant followed, and then one of her children; a third servant fell sick, and had to be moved to Weymouth, where she afterwards died. Thither Mrs. Adams followed her to be by the bedside of her own mother, and from thence, on October 1st, she wrote, in an agony of grief, to her husband, —

“Have pity upon me! have pity upon me, O thou my beloved, for the hand of God presseth me sore. Yet will I be dumb and silent, and not open my mouth, because Thou, O Lord, hast done it. How can I tell you (O my bursting heart!) that my dear mother has left me! After sustaining sixteen days' severe conflict, nature fainted, and she fell asleep. At times I was almost ready to faint under this severe and heavy stroke, separated from *thee*, who used to be a comforter to me in affliction; but, blessed be God! his ear is not heavy that He cannot hear, but He has bid us call upon Him in time of trouble.”

Ten days after this letter was written Col. Josiah Quincy watched, from an upper window of his house, the ship that bore General Gage down the harbor on his way home to England. The pane of glass is still preserved on which he then scratched a record of the incident. But six months more were to pass before the evacuation of Boston. During that time the apprehension of attack along the Braintree shore was continual; but those dwelling there had become accustomed to it, and took the alarms more quietly. Colonel Quincy wrote, —

“Although we have five companies stationed near us, yet the shells thrown from the floating batteries and the flat-bottomed boats which row with twenty oars, carry fifty men each, and are defended with cannon and swivels, keep us under perpetual apprehension of being attacked whenever we shall become an object of sufficient magnitude to excite the attention of our enemies. Our circumstances are truly melancholy, and grow rather worse than better.”

Towards the end of October the sickness abated, and as the winter came on the situation became in every way more endurable. Money, it was true, had already become scarce.

Paper currency was at a discount of ten per cent., and a silver dollar was a great rarity. Prices had begun to rise. Those of foreign goods had doubled. Molasses was an article in common household use; its ordinary price had risen from twenty-five cents a gallon to forty. Of the domestic products, corn was sixty-five cents a bushel, rye eighty, hay twenty dollars a ton, and wood three dollars and a half a cord. Meat was abundant. The condition of the people was, therefore, in no way unbearable; and, though Boston was in a state of siege only ten miles away, with the exception that the greater part of the able-bodied men were away in camp, life went on in Braintree much as usual.

This continued until March, the war and its incidents being, meanwhile, the great subject of discussion. Rumors of what was going on in camp and in Congress were abundant. Among others, there came a story, which was industriously bruited about, that Hancock and John Adams had both left Philadelphia, and sailed for England from New York, on board an English man-of-war. In other words, they had proved traitors. In the morbid condition of the public mind, even this absurd story gained credence. Angry disputes took place in Braintree taverns, and "some men were collared and dragged out of the shop with great threats for reporting such scandalous lies." Norton Quincy, then one of the selectmen, seems to have been especially excited over the calumny. Though a man of indolent temper, he went so far as to offer his own life as a forfeit for that of the husband of his niece, should the report prove true; but, a mere war rumor, it was soon forgotten. Indeed, the beginning of new military operations soon drove all such wild ideas out of the people's heads.

On the 3d of March the sound of heavy cannonading from the direction of Boston warned the people of Braintree that new movements were going on. The militia were all mustered, and marched away with three days' rations. Scarcely a man was left in town, and the place of those serving as sea-coast guards was filled by others from the interior.

"I have just returned," wrote Mrs. Adams, "from Penn's Hill, where I have been sitting to hear the amazing roar of cannon, and from whence I could see every shell which was thrown. . . . I went to bed about

twelve, and rose again a little after one. I could no more sleep than if I had been in the engagement; the rattling of the windows, the jar of the house, the continual roar of twenty-four pounders, and the bursting of shells. About six this morning there was quiet. I rejoiced in a few hours' calm. I hear we got possession of Dorchester Hill last night."

Three days later, she speaks of the militia as all returning, and of her great disappointment that nothing more was effected than the occupation of Dorchester Heights. "I hoped and expected more important and decisive scenes. I would not have suffered all I have for two such hills." A fortnight later the evacuation of Boston had been decided upon. "Between seventy and eighty vessels of various sizes are gone down and lie in a row in fair sight of this place, all of which appear to be loaded." The fear of marauding parties was so great at this time that the shores had to be guarded nightly, and the town, while authorizing the selectmen to pay the public moneys in their hands over to the provincial treasurer, added the words, — "He removing his office Ten miles at least from Boston or any other Seaport Town." To the same effect, under date of the 18th of March, when an adjourned town-meeting was to have been held, the following entry appears in the records:—

"The inhabitants being obliged to guard the shores to prevent the threatened damages from the ships which lay in the harbor with the troops aboard, the meeting was adjourned to 25th instant, at one o'clock P. M."

Three days later, Colonel Quincy reported as follows to General Washington:—

"Since the ships and troops fell down below, we have been apprehensive of an attack from their boats, in pursuit of live stock; but yesterday, in the afternoon we were happily relieved by the appearance of a number of whale-boats, stretching across our bay, under the command (as I have since learned) of the brave Lieut.-Col. Tupper, who in the forenoon had been cannonading the ships, with one or more field-pieces, from the east head of Thompson's Island, and I suppose last night cannonaded them from the same place, or from Spectacle Island. This judicious manœuvre had its genuine effect; for, this morning, the Admiral and all the rest of the ships, except one of the line, came to sail, and fell down to Nantasket Road, where a countless number is now collected."

At the same time Mrs. Adams wrote, —

"From Penn's Hill we have a view of the largest fleet ever seen in America. You may count upwards of a hundred and seventy sail. They

look like a forest. . . . To what quarter of the world they are bound is wholly unknown; but it is generally thought to New York. Many people are elated with their quitting Boston. I confess I do not feel so. 'T is only lifting a burden from one shoulder to the other, which is perhaps less able or less willing to support it. . . . Every foot of ground which they obtain now they must fight for, and may they purchase it at a Bunker Hill price."

And in reply John Adams exclaimed, —

"We are taking precautions to defend every place that is in danger, the Carolinas, Virginia, New York, Canada. I can think of nothing but fortifying Boston Harbor. I want more cannon than are to be had. I want a fortification upon Point Alderton, one upon Lovell's Island, one upon George's Island, several upon Long Island, one upon the Moon, one upon Squantum. I want to hear of half a dozen fire-ships, and two or three hundred fire-rafts prepared. I want to hear of row-galleys, floating batteries built, and booms laid across the channel in the narrows, and *Vaisseaux de Frise* sunk in it. I wish to hear that you are translating Braintree commons into the channel."

Though the body of the English fleet took its departure for Halifax during the month of March, a few vessels lay at anchor in the outer harbor or cruised about the bay for several weeks longer. They seemed reluctant to give up all pretence of maintaining a hold on Boston. At the end of May, Mrs. Adams wrote: — "We have now in fair sight of my uncle's [Norton Quincy's house, at Mount Wollaston] the 'Commodore,' a thirty-six gun frigate, another large vessel, and six small craft." At last military movements were made under orders from the patriot authorities looking to the occupation of the islands, and on Friday, the 14th of June, Ezekiel Price wrote in his diary: — "I went to Squantum, and spent the day there, where I had the pleasure of the agreeable sight of the harbor of Boston being wholly cleared of those pirates and plunderers, which this day completed two years since they had shut up the port and harbor of Boston. The Continental troops were assisted by the Colony troops and the militia of the neighboring towns; all of which behaved with their usual bravery, courage and resolution."¹ In consequence of these movements the last remnant of the fleet, " 'Commodore' and all," put to sea upon the day named, and "not a transport, a ship, or a tender [was next day] to be seen." Braintree, in

¹ *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Nov. 1863, p. 257.

common with her sister-towns on Boston Bay, was thereafter allowed to rest in peace.

So far as Massachusetts was concerned, the War of Independence now entered upon a new stage. Neither any longer was the enemy on the hearth-stone, nor was the struggle a novelty. The glow of excitement which stimulated and made easy the first patriotic movement had passed away. In its place came a consciousness of the drag and drain of a seemingly endless war. In this respect the experience of one generation is but a repetition of that of another. The ugly details of the past are forgotten, while whatever there was of heroic about it stands out clean cut and prominent. On the other hand, the selfish, venal spirit of the present makes itself painfully apparent, and is supposed always to be of recent development, — one of the characteristics of a race degenerate. A careful examination of the record reveals a different story. The years between 1860 and 1865 will lose nothing by contrast with those between 1776 and 1782. In each case the conflict opened on a people wild with patriotic ardor. All were burning to do something ; many could not do too much. Money was poured out like water ; regiments formed as if by magic. Self-sacrifice was the order of the day, and life in the presence of trial assumed an unknown charm. For the time being a whole people had become heroic.

Then came the reaction. The realities of war began to be felt. Enlistments fell off in 1776, as they did in 1862. It grew harder to procure men just in proportion to the more pressing need of men. Values were unsettled. Prices rose. The poorer and more selfish natures began to show the baseness of which they were capable. The voice of the croaker was loud in the land. The contractor grew rich ; the patriot poor. It seemed as though the war would never end ; not a few were forward to express the wish that it had never begun. The weak, the craven and the mean longed for quiet and the flesh-pots.

Even while the town clerk of Braintree, in obedience to the mandate of the Provincial Council, was entering the Declaration of Independence on the records, "there to remain as a perpetual memorial," — only three months after the last

British ship had been driven from Boston Harbor, — even thus early Mrs. Adams wrote as follows to her husband : —

“I am sorry to see a spirit so venal prevailing everywhere. When our men were drawn out for Canada, a very large bounty was given them; and now another call is made upon us. No one will go without a large bounty, though only for two months, and each town seems to think its honor engaged in outbidding the others. The province pay is forty shillings. In addition to that, this town voted to make it up six pounds. They then drew out the persons most unlikely to go, and they are obliged to give three pounds to hire a man. Some pay the whole fine, — ten pounds. Forty men are now drafted from this town. More than one half, from sixteen to fifty, are now in the service. This method of conducting will create a general uneasiness in the Continental army.”

She then goes on to speak of the rage for privateering which prevailed, and adds that “vast numbers” were employed in that way.

Before entering further into the burden which the war then imposed on Braintree, in common with all other Massachusetts towns, it will be well to try to form some idea of the strength which was there to bear the burden. What was the population of the town during the Revolution? — and what was its wealth? The census of 1765 gives the population at 2,433, that of 1776 at 2,871, and that of 1790 at 2,771. During the war, therefore, taken as one period, Braintree must have numbered a population of close upon 3,500 souls. Of these, 875 would have been males above sixteen years of age; for the war lasted eight years, and in the course of it a new arms-bearing generation grew up. Experience has always shown that, for the practical purposes of war, men above forty years of age are useless. As members of a home-guard and during short periods of service, they can be made more or less effective; but the bivouac, long marches and unaccustomed fare break them down. They are not equal to campaign exposure. Consequently not more than two thirds at most of the men above sixteen in any community are properly capable of bearing arms. Those above forty years of age, and the halt, the lame and the blind, must be exempted. During the years 1776 to 1782, therefore, the whole arms-bearing population of Braintree did not exceed 600 at the outside. It probably fell considerably short of that number.

As respects available wealth, it is far more difficult to fix on any safe basis for estimate. This subject has already been considered. It has been stated that the Braintree people during the colonial period had substance, but very little of what would now be called quick capital. In other words, they had nothing which could readily be turned into money. They owned the houses in which they lived, their farms, farm buildings and stock. They had clothes and some furniture. A few had money out at interest; and others were in debt. To this general rule of no available means there were, of course, in an old town like Braintree, a few exceptions. Such were Colonel Quincy, Major Miller, General Palmer, and, possibly, Mr. Thayer. John Adams was not an exception to it. He had nothing except his house in Queen Street, Boston, and the farm at Penn's Hill. The farm his wife tried to manage. Few men were more capable, and yet in September, 1777, she wrote to him, — "Unless you return, what little property you possess will be lost. . . . As to what is here under my immediate inspection, I do the best I can with it. But it will not, at the high price labor is, pay its way." This was the common experience. The Penn's Hill farm also affords a basis on which to make an approximate estimate of the wealth of the town. One part of that farm consisted of thirty-five acres of arable land, with a house, barn and other buildings. With this part went eighteen acres of pasture. Bought in 1774 the cost of the property was £440, or \$1,450. In 1765 there were 327 houses in Braintree, occupied by 357 families, and ten years later, at the time of the war, the number of houses may have increased to 400. That bought by John Adams was one of the better sort. Judging by the sum paid for it, an estimate of \$1,000 to a house and a family would seem to be liberal, and is probably excessive; for in the town there were some paupers and many poor people, who, living only, never accumulated anything. The owners of farms were accounted the rich men. The sum of \$400,000 would thus represent the aggregate accumulated wealth of Braintree in 1776.

Such being the strength, — 600 men capable of bearing arms, with an accumulation of \$400,000 behind them, — it

remains to consider the burden. This is no less difficult correctly to estimate than the other. The rolls show, for instance, that Braintree furnished 1,600 men for military duty in the course of the war, besides a large number (of which there is no record^s) who served on the water. And, again, in one single year (1781) it assessed itself \$600,000 to buy beef for the army and pay the town expenses. But the \$600,000 were paid in paper currency, and the term of service of the men was apt not to exceed three days. Such figures only serve to falsify. During the Revolution Braintree did not contribute either 1,600 men or a million dollars, for the simple reason that her inhabitants did not number the one or have the other. The drain was doubtless heavy enough, but it was at least limited by the total resources.

In considering, then, the Braintree enlistments, those for short periods must be left out of the account. A service of one or two days in guarding the shore may have been a summer picnic, with an agreeable spice of danger, but in no sense was it war. The men engaged in that service were not soldiers. They were mere members of a *posse comitatus*. The shorter enlistments also were of not much more value. Indeed, experience has shown that in actual war there is no more cruel way of wasting blood and treasure than sending to the field men enlisted for a few weeks or months. Almost never are they of any real service.

A Mr. Partridge, of Duxbury, one of a committee who waited on Washington in October, 1776, asked him whether enlistments for one year would not suffice. He exclaimed in reply, — “Good God! gentlemen, our cause is ruined if you engage men for only a year. You must not think of it. If we hope for success we must have men enlisted for the whole term of the war.” This course was too Spartan; the weaker, the more wasteful and more murderous one of short enlistments was pursued. Accordingly, men were enlisted in Braintree for the Canada expedition in 1776, for the Rhode Island expeditions in 1777 and 1778, and for the Penobscot expedition of 1779; others went down to garrison the castle in the harbor, or were stationed at Hull. Furnishing and equipping these men went far toward exhausting the town; but it was

playing at war. The long term Continentals were the men who did the work. They were at Long Island, and they were at Stony Point; they forced Burgoyne's intrenchments, and captured Rahl's Hessians; they bore the heat of Monmouth, and stormed the redoubt at Yorktown. This was war. The question is always, — How many of these men did the town put into the field? Picnics and summer promenades do not count.

So also as regards taxes and supplies. That the stress on the towns during the Revolution was great is indisputable. They were called on for money and they were called on for men, for clothes and for meat. But the figures are apt to be expressed in Continental currency. There was no financial, as there was no military, folly which the New England people did not commit during the Revolution. Throughout they showed that the town-meeting is ill adapted to war. They tried to make patriotism a substitute for the provost-guard. They issued false money. They regulated prices. They mobbed those who preferred not to exchange good merchandise for worthless paper. It was not in them to do what Frederick II. did in Prussia, — take the men they needed and the supplies they needed, and finish up the work in hand. That would have been war; and to war with this grim visage the government of the people by the people is distinctly averse. Even in 1757, when it was a question of protecting the hearthstones of New England against tomahawk and the Frenchman, — even then, when there came down from Fort William Henry "almost every day despatches from the General to the New England colonies, urging for troops and assistance," — even at that supreme moment the Braintree town-meeting instructed its representative "to use his best endeavours to prevail with the General Court to Project and pursue some better and less oppressive Method of raising soldiers . . . than that of Fine and Impress." As it was in 1757, so was it in 1777 and again in 1862. What New England did was to campaign interminably, under town-meeting inspiration, with infinite and unnecessary loss of life and waste of money.

As respects Braintree's contributions to this waste of money during the War of Independence, the records are suggestive,

but exasperatingly vague. Though full of votes alluding to reports and statements at the time made, but since lost, they contain almost no exact figures, and, even when supplemented by the State archives, they fail to piece out the story. One thing stands out in them hard and apparent: the zeal of the early 1775 soon vanished. Not only during the years which followed could few recruits be obtained from among the townsmen, but they would not submit to a draft; and in September, 1777, and again in June, 1780, and July, 1781, the Braintree town-meeting formally voted to indemnify the militia officers for any fine they might incur by omitting to draft men when required so to do by the General Court.¹ Committee after committee was then appointed to fill up the quota by going out to hunt up men in other towns. The inhabitants were finally divided into classes, and each class was called upon somewhere to secure its recruits. The poorest and worst material in the community was thus collected together and swept into the ranks of Washington's army. A large portion of the heroes of '76 were men of this stamp. In 1781, for instance, Captain Joseph Baxter, one of the town recruiting committee, had a long wrangle with the selectmen of Boston over a wretched bounty-jumper named Williams. Both parties claimed him as one of their quota. The Boston agents had given him fifteen guineas, and Captain Baxter "was drove to every extremity to prove the justness of his claim to said Williams, but finally obtained him;" though a year later Braintree had to pay over to Boston the sum of £21 "to refund to them the money paid by them" to this particular exemplar of revolutionary patriotism. The records of the year 1780 indicate the most severe stress. They read as follows, the meeting being held in the Middle Precinct meeting-house on the 27th of June. The motion was

"To make an offer to such persons as will engage to go into the Service.

"After a considerable debate upon the matter, it was

"*Voted*, To give each man One Thousand Dollars as a Bounty, also Half a Bushel of Corn for Every Day from the Time they march to the time they are discharged or leave the army; and also half a bushel of Corn for every Twenty miles they shall be from home when discharged; and also

¹ *Records*, 484, 511, 526.

"*Voted*, That the town will pay them the Forty shillings per month promised by the State, in hard money, if the soldiers enable the Town to Receive the said 40/ from the State. Unless it will best sute the soldiers to Receive it from the State themselves.

"*Voted*, The Selectmen should give Security to the persons that shall engage pursuant to the foregoing vote; and also the Selectmen Procure the Corn at Harvest, and Store it for the men until they return.

"General Palmer generously gave into the hands of the moderator One Thousand and Eighty Dollars, to be equally divided among the thirty-six men that shall first engage in the six months' service as a Reinforcement to the Continental Army. For which the thanks of the Town were voted him.

"The Familys of such men as shall engage for the Term of six months shall be supply'd by the Selectmen with Corn, Wood, or such other articals as they stand in need off, which is to be charge and Reducted from the wages of that person, which is to be paid him in Corn upon his Returning home."

At an adjourned meeting held the next day it was further voted to exempt from tax all notes issued by the town for money loaned it to procure men. Two days later the town again met, and then

"The Committee Reported that they had Inlisted thirty-one men, and that there was a prospect of Inlisting the other five men which is wanting to complete the first 36 men called for, and likewise a part or all the nine men Required.

"General Palmer generously made the same offer to the nine men as he did to the 36 men, — that was thirty dollars each; for which the Thanks of the Town was again Voted him."

At an adjourned meeting, held on the 5th of July, it was, "after a Long Debate, Voted that the officers' pay, including the State's pay, be made equal to a Private."

At another adjourned meeting on the 10th, "the Votes that was past on that day (5th) Concerning the officers' pay being all disannul'd and void, *Voted*, To give each officer that shall go from this Town for the three months' service Five Hundred Dollars, being the same sum as was Voted the soldiers as a Bounty; also voted the officers the same pay from the Town, Exclusive of their other pay, as the soldiers Receive. Cap. Newcomb appeared to go upon the encouragement."

The calls for men were incessant until 1782. A new crop of fighting material had then matured, for the boy not yet twelve when the skirmish at Concord bridge took place was

eighteen at the surrender of Yorktown. Between 1775 and 1782, as nearly as can now be estimated, Braintree sent into the field about 550 men, enlisted for periods of six months or over. The number of men, as well as the length of enlistment, varied with the different years. In 1775, for instance, besides militia to guard the coast, the town sent not less than 150 men, enlisted to the close of the year, into Washington's army about Boston. In 1776 about 120 men were furnished. In 1777 some seventy were enlisted for three years. In no year were less than forty sent, except in 1781, when the enlistment appears to have been for four months only. Under this system the same men in the course of a seven years' war may have enlisted several times. It is impossible, therefore, to even estimate the portion of Braintree's 600 arms-bearing men who actually served in the Continental army, though it is probably safe to say that the number did not fall below 300. For shorter terms and in the militia every man in town capable of bearing them bore arms. The average force of Continentals which the town kept in the field would seem to have been about seventy men. There is no record of the number of those who were wounded, or who died in battle or in camp; nor do the figures which have been given include those who served on the sea. Indeed, it is only through incidental mention in the letters of Mrs. Adams that we even know that privateering was all the rage among the young men of Braintree. Yet not only did she so describe it in 1776, but five years later, in December, 1781, she sent to her husband at the Hague the names of no less than twelve Braintree boys captured in the British Channel on the privateer *Essex*, from Salem, and then confined in Plymouth jail. "Ned Savil," "Job Field" and "Josiah Bass" were unmistakable North Precinct names, and doubtless several score of others saw service in this same way. Nor was it a service lightly to be spoken of. The supplies and munitions of war picked up by the Yankee privateers went far toward keeping Washington's army in the field.

So far, therefore, as men were concerned, it seems probable that the Revolutionary land and sea service combined kept at least a fourth part of the effective arms-bearing force of Brain-

tree continually employed from 1775 to 1782. They were drawn away from all peaceful occupations, and, in place of being producers, they became consumers; and what the consumption of the war amounted to now remains to be considered. During the three years prior to Lexington and Concord — that is, between 1772 and 1774 — Braintree raised annually by taxation the sum of £150 provincial money, or \$500, to meet current town expenses; the precinct or church levy being a distinct charge. In 1776 the sum of £1,176 was raised under three separate votes. This, too, was in hard money, for even as late as December of that year silver was but ten per cent. premium. The next year the amount raised was £1,500. Indian corn was still only five shillings a bushel, its ordinary price being four shillings; but rye had doubled, selling for twelve shillings, while rum had gone up from three to eight shillings, and molasses was not to be had. In May, 1778, the sum of £4,000 was ordered to be assessed immediately, for in April a requisition in kind of shirts, shoes and stockings had been made on the town. A similar requisition for blankets had been made in January, 1777. In June, 1779, another requisition of shirts, shoes and stockings was made, the town to furnish “a number of these articles equal to one-seventh Part of the Male Inhabitants above the Age of sixteen years;” from which possibly it might be inferred that Braintree then had nearly one hundred men in service. In January the selectmen had been ordered to procure one thousand bushels of grain for the town, and in November a levy of £6,000 was voted “toward defraying the charges of the same.” The currency was now fast losing its value, — how fast may be inferred from the fact that in place of the former allowance of twopence a head for killing old black-birds, in May, 1780, the sum of thirty shillings was voted, while the three shillings a day for labor on the highways became seven pounds ten shillings. Indeed, there were no longer any quotable prices. Calico was from thirty to forty dollars per yard, molasses twenty dollars a gallon, sugar four dollars a pound. In May, 1780, the selectmen were ordered to secure corn, so as to be prepared to give those who enlisted half a bushel of it a day instead of money. In July a re-

quisition came for shirts, shoes, stockings and blankets, and another for horses; in September a third for 23,400 pounds of beef, and in December yet a fourth for 44,983 additional pounds of beef. In August it was voted to raise £120,000, and in October £60,000 more. At the same time the selectmen were directed to "wait on Colonel Quincy and know of him whether he will lend the Town a sum of hard money." It nowhere appears whether he did so, but he would, even if he had the "hard money" in hand, have been quite justified in declining further money transactions with the town, as his last experience in that way had afforded convincing proof that the same spirit Mrs. Adams noticed in August, 1776, not only prevailed, as she asserted, "everywhere," but it pervaded the financial no less than the military systems. The New England town organization was in 1776 no more exempt from jobbery than the Continental government then, or the government of the United States ninety years later. There remains in the records no trace of any loan made by Colonel Quincy to the town six years earlier, in 1774, but in 1783 a committee chosen to examine into the selectmen's accounts reported "a Ballance of Eleven Pounds four shillings in hard money Borrowed in the year 1781 not accounted for." When this report was laid before the town-meeting another committee was chosen to inquire further into this deficit, "and also what has became of the money Borrowed of Colo^l Josiah Quincy which was received in hard money by the Selectmen." Evidently ugly stories, affecting the character of some of the town officers, were afloat, and, though no report from this committee is mentioned in the records, nine months later another committee was chosen "to settle with those Persons who now hold money in their hands that was borrowed by the Town of Colo^l Josiah Quincy." This was in March, 1784, and twelve days before Colonel Quincy had died, a victim to his love of field-sports; for his death was brought on by an illness induced by exposure from sitting on a cake of ice on a cold winter's day, fowling piece in hand, watching for wild ducks, he being then in his seventy-fifth year. Seven years more passed away, during which the town struggled in a hopeless sort of way with obligations contracted at various times and in a

steadily depreciating currency, those holding which were continuously referred to in the records as "certain Persons who call themselves sufferers by shifting their securities for money Lent to the Town;" while at that very time the collectors were by formal vote authorized to receive for the town taxes "one Dollar of the New Emission in Lieu of Forty Dollars of the old Emission or one Dollar in Silver in the Lieu of one Hundred and twenty." In the case of the money borrowed of Colonel Quincy the town declined to hold itself responsible except "for so much of said money as the Town has had the Real benefit of." Naturally, as the money in question had been borrowed by the selectmen, the heirs of Colonel Quincy declined to make any distinction, and legal proceedings were begun; the matter was then referred to committee after committee, all of which seem to have evinced the utmost unwillingness to grapple with it, until at last in August, 1791, the town refused to accept the report of one of these committees "appointed to enquire of what became of the money Borrow'd of Col^o Josiah Quincy in the year 1775," and, adding to the committee Deacon French and Major Penniman, "directed them to report."

Then at last the facts came to light, the ugly stories which had circulated through the town for nearly twenty years assuming definite shape. The committee reported, at an adjourned meeting three weeks later, that the amount of the loan was £150, of which £101 only had reached the treasury of the town, the remaining £49 having been retained for their own use by three of the selectmen of 1775, respectively bearing the titles of Colonel, Deacon and Major, all of whose names were given, though two of them were dead; and the brief report closed with the statement that this sum of £49 "has not as yet been accounted for." Major James Penniman seems to have been the active spirit in ferreting out this disgraceful job, and to him was now assigned the duty of calling, on behalf of the town, on those who had received the money, or their representatives, as also of making a final settlement with such as had "advanced money for the purpose of hiring men in the years 1775, &c."

In those days and under the laws then in force, it has been

already stated that, after the warrant for the tax levy was delivered to the constable, he became personally liable for the amount specified in it. It was a debt from him to the town; and, if he failed to collect any part of it, for that part he became responsible, and must make it good or go on record as a defaulter. Looking over the mysterious entries in the Braintree town records now,—and those entries will be found duplicated in the records of all the Massachusetts towns,—it is difficult to see how during the revolutionary period any constable could have performed his duties, or any town treasurer kept his accounts. The confusion was inextricable. It seems at last to have settled itself on some basis reached by compromise and deemed “about right.” But as early as 1780 what is now known as the “fiat,” but then called the paper, money delusion was over, and effectually disposed of for two generations. Indeed, for long years it was supposed to be finally killed in English-speaking America, as to say that a thing “was not worth a continental” passed into the speech of the people as the proverb expressing complete absence of value; but later years have proved again that nations learn slowly, and that few sleights of hand have more lasting fascination for the average man than what has been happily termed “the currency juggle.”

But in 1780 the Massachusetts towns had received their lesson on the subject of “fiat” money, though they had not yet paid for it. The currency juggle deluded no longer. The country was flooded with counterfeit bills, the regular issues were discredited, and but half of the £200,000 assessment of 1780 was ever collected. In 1781 the sum of £1,400 in specie was raised, and the town as usual was called on for beef and clothing in kind. In 1782 only £700 were raised, but the requisitions for men and supplies still came in. In March, 1783, the old record-book, which had served for fifty-two years, was full, and when the town clerk bought a new one he noted on its first page that its price was “Five Silver Dollars;” and “a Days Work on Highways,” instead of being “sott” at £7 10s. per day, was fixed at three shillings.

In view of the requisitions in kind, and the utter confusion of the currency, it is impossible to say what the real

money cost of the War for Independence was. Braintree went into it in excellent financial condition, — a condition, indeed, which theoretically was almost ideal, for, as the result of the sale of its common lands, it had interest-bearing securities in its treasury from which it derived an income sufficient to defray three fourths of its whole annual expenses. The inhabitants of the town were, therefore, as nearly exempt from taxation as people dwelling in a civilized community can hope to be, for the total annual municipal levy exacted from 2,500 souls was but \$270, or less than eleven cents each; nor was there any system of indirect taxation. Of course such a state of affairs could continue only so long as the lessons of thrift and economy which generations of hard, close living had ground into the lives of the people, lasted and were binding as unwritten laws upon them. The time inevitably must have come when the absence of any sense of public burden would have led to extravagance and corruption; but in 1770 that time was far distant. The town then was a capitalist, — a very considerable money-lender for the time, — holding in its treasury the bonds of many of its more prominent inhabitants, bearing interest and secured by the mortgage of real estate. In the course of the revolutionary troubles all this accumulation disappeared, and, when peace came at last, Braintree was heavily in debt. Fortunately, and of necessity also, the notes and obligations of the town, shared, as has just been seen, the fate of the paper currencies in which they were payable. Some of them were paid; some were compromised; some were repudiated. The annual tax levy, which before the war was only £150, after it became £1,000. The cases of individual hardship must have been many, but, fortunately, there were in those days few who lived on fixed incomes. Indeed, the minister was almost the only such person who could be suggested. All others were dependent for support on their hands, or the produce of their fields. Taxes and the increased price of labor more than used up the whole profits of industry, and, during the entire revolutionary period, the people were eating into their accumulated substance. Braintree, it has been seen, kept an average of at least seventy men in the Continental army, besides the indeterminate number employed in the

service of the State or its uniformly unfortunate independent expeditions to Maine, Rhode Island or the like. While it is impossible even to approximate the cost, expressed in hard money, of the men employed in the enterprises last referred to, it would certainly not seem out of the way to average the daily charge of those serving in the Continental army at three shillings, or fifty cents, per day, which would include food, clothing and munitions, as well as pay; any possible margin of excess in this allowance, serving as an offset for expense incurred on all accounts not included in the continental service. Estimated on this far from extravagant basis, the War of Independence could not have cost the inhabitants of Braintree less than \$100,000 in money. It has been seen that \$100,000 was probably equivalent to a quarter part of the entire accumulation since the settlement of the town. That one fourth part of the whole substance of the community should have been thus consumed in distant military operations seems incredible; and the statement of the fact should cause in subsequent generations a realizing sense of the obstinate spirit of independence which nerved the patriot side. In 1786 the population was not yet so large as it had been ten years before, in 1776, and a long period of terrible depression followed the return of peace. The stress had indeed been great, and the loss of men and means oppressive; but none the less Braintree had been fortunate,—the war had never once crossed the boundary of the town.

The military contribution of Braintree to the War of Independence was limited to men and supplies. She furnished no officer who rose to high command, or evinced marked soldierly qualities. Deacon Joseph Palmer was commissioned brigadier-general; but, though a man of active nature and full of enterprise of a certain sort, Palmer was then sixty years of age. His campaigning days were past. Full of zeal, he was at Bunker Hill, and subsequently very active during the siege of Boston; but his largest experience was as commander of the Massachusetts contingent in the unfortunate "secret expedition" of September, 1777, planned to drive the British from Rhode Island. It is claimed that the wretched failure of the expedition was not to be laid at General Palmer's door; but

Mrs. Adams could not refrain from saying in a letter to her husband, — “I know you will be mortified, but if you want your arms crowned with victory, you should not appoint what General Gates calls dreaming deacons to conduct them.”

During the later years of the struggle John Adams was absent from the country. In November, 1777, he had come home from Philadelphia, and then, while still at Braintree, been selected to represent the Congress in Europe. All arrangements having been made, the frigate *Boston* reported in Boston Harbor to carry him abroad, and in February it lay at anchor in Nantasket Roads. On the morning of the 13th, Mr. Adams left his house at Penn’s Hill, and accompanied by his son John Quincy, a boy of ten, drove down to Norton Quincy’s, at Mount Wollaston, on the Germantown road. His wife did not accompany him; most probably she did not feel equal to so doing. Hardly had he got to Norton Quincy’s when a boat from the frigate pulled up to the beach. In it was Captain Tucker, of the *Boston*. Coming up to the house he joined Mr. Adams, who, after writing a few hurried lines to his wife, walked down to the shore, and, bidding good-by to Norton Quincy, the party was rowed across the bay to the frigate. As the father and the young lad drew away from the familiar land, they could not but have cast homesick glances back to it; for it was mid-winter, and the British were masters of the sea. But “Johnny,” his father wrote, behaved “like a man.”¹

Mr. Adams returned home after an absence of eighteen months, reaching Braintree on the 2d of August, 1779. A week later a town-meeting was held for the purpose, among other things, of choosing delegates to the convention which was to meet at Cambridge, on the 1st of September, for the purpose of framing a State Constitution. It was voted to send only one delegate, and “the Honble. John Adams, Esq., was chosen for that purpose.” The convention met, and while in attendance upon it, with the draft of the instrument the preparation of which had been committed to him² still in-

¹ *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his Wife*, 326; J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, xii. 277.

² *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Nov. 1860, pp. 88–92.

complete, Mr. Adams was again sent abroad, and left Braintree on the 13th of November, shortly before the setting in of what his wife afterwards wrote to him was "the sublimest winter I ever saw. In the latter part of December and beginning of January there fell the highest snow known since the year 1740 ; and from that time to [the close of February] the Bay has been frozen so hard that people have walked, rode and sledged over it to Boston. It was frozen across Nantasket Road so that no vessel could come in or go out for a month after the storms." But, like most steadily severe winters, unbroken by rain or thaw, that of 1780 was healthy, the people of Braintree suffering only for need of fuel ; in that respect sharing to a small extent in the hardships of Washington's army in its New Jersey cantonments, where, in the coldest winter of the century, the snow lay two feet deep about soldiers insufficiently supplied with either food or clothes, and the term of enlistment of a large part of whom expired with the year.

It was not until the summer of 1788, when the war had been closed for more than five years, that Mr. Adams returned to Braintree, and in July, 1784, his wife had joined him in London. Fifty-six years later Josiah Quincy, then a man verging upon seventy, described how he, a boy of twelve, went with his mother in June to bid Mrs. Adams farewell before she left the house at the foot of Penn's Hill, not again to return to it, for her voyage across the Atlantic. "I remember her a matronly beauty, in which respect she yielded to few of her sex, full of joy and elevated with hope. Peace had just been declared, Independence obtained, and she was preparing to go from that humble mansion to join the husband she loved at the court of St. James."¹

¹ Whitney, *Commemorative Discourse*, 1840, p. 53.

CHAPTER XVII.

EXHAUSTION.

It was then four years and a half since Mr. Adams in November, 1779, had left with James Bowdoin and Samuel Adams, his associates on the committee of the Cambridge convention, his unfinished draft of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. On the 22d of the following May "the freeholders and other inhabitants of Braintree qualified to vote in the choice of a Representative"—so the record ran—met in the Middle Precinct meeting-house and made choice of Richard Cranch to the General Court; at the same time "the male Inhabitants of said Town of the age of Twenty-one Years and upwards" were assembled to consider of the form of government agreed on by the convention. "The Form being Read, The Town thought proper to choose a Committee to take the same under consideration and Report upon the adjournment." A committee of fifteen was accordingly selected, with General Palmer at its head. This was by no means the first time in recent years that the inhabitants of Braintree had met to consider questions of fundamental law; and, indeed, nothing could be more characteristic than the formal and deliberate manner in which they uniformly approached the subject. They seemed fully impressed with its importance. In February, 1778, the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union then drawn up by the Continental Congress had been submitted. The Braintree record states that in the town-meeting these articles were "distinctly and Repeatedly read and maturely considered." They were approved except in one point. The action of the town upon this was significant, as showing how jealous the ordinary New Englander was of his local independence, and what a vast educational

work then remained to be done before a stable Federal Constitution had any chance of adoption. It was provided in the Articles of Confederation of 1778 that Congress should "have the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace or war." For this necessary provision the town of Braintree formally submitted the following absurd substitute: — "The United States in Congress Assembled shall first obtain the approbation of the Legislative Body of each of the United States, or the major part of them, before they shall determine on peace or war."

At this same time the General Court having seen fit, as Bancroft expresses it, to form themselves into a constituent convention, submitted a draft of a State Constitution for approval by the people. It was considered in a Braintree town-meeting held on the 13th of April. Having been read, it was referred to a committee of fifteen to take the same "under Consideration and Report upon the adjournment." Capt. Peter B. Adams, a younger brother of John, was chairman of this committee. A month later it reported that those composing it "did not approve" of the proposed government, and "it being put to the members present, thirteen was in favor of the form, seventy-four against it."

It has been asserted that the history of the world contains no record of a people which, in the institution of its government, moved with the caution which during 1779 and 1780 marked the proceedings of Massachusetts,¹ and the truth of this statement was certainly exemplified in the case of Braintree. The committee of fifteen, of which General Palmer was chairman, included among its titled members one general, two colonels, two majors, one captain, one lieutenant, two deacons and a judge, and for two weeks it had the draft of the proposed constitution under careful advisement. It was understood to have been framed in large part by their own fellow townsman; but when, on the 5th of June, the committee reported the instrument back to the town-meeting, it recommended "sum alterations and amendments, which being read to the Town was Voted and axcepted." General Palmer was then chosen a delegate, in place of John Adams,

¹ Bancroft (ed. 1876), vi. 309.

to attend the convention which was to perfect the draft. The first election under the Constitution was held on the 4th of the following September, and in Braintree 106 votes were cast for Governor, of which John Hancock received 95, and James Bowdoin 11. Richard Cranch was four weeks later chosen Braintree's first representative under the new constitution. The following year only 62 votes were cast, and in 1782 only 94. In the last-named year the vote between Hancock and Bowdoin was a tie; but in 1783, Benjamin Lincoln received 87 votes to 14 cast for Hancock. In 1780 the war, so far as Braintree was concerned, entered on the dreary, dragging stage which preceded its close two years later. It was in May of this year that Charleston was captured by the British forces, and in August Gates was defeated at Camden by Cornwallis; while the next month occurred the treason of Arnold and the execution of André. In May the Braintree town-meeting fixed the price of a day's work on the highways "at seven pounds, Ten shillings and all other Labour in the usual proportion," and Mrs. Adams wrote to her husband, — "Our poor old currency is breathing its last gasp." This was the year already referred to as that of the most severe stress, when forty-five men were called for from Braintree, or what practically amounted to one man out of each eight who were still left capable of bearing arms. The difficulty found in raising that large quota of recruits has been described, as well as how the town practically nullified the action of the General Court by voting "to Indemnify the militia Officers from any Fines that may be lay'd on them for Ommitting or neglecting to Draught the men when Required." Mrs. Adams was quite justified in writing, — "The efforts are great, and we give, this campaign, more than half our property to defend the other. He who tarries from the field cannot possibly earn sufficient at home to reward him who takes it." In September, at the very time of Arnold's treason, a "Silver money Tax" was imposed, and in October Mrs. Adams wrote telling how flour was a dollar and a half a pound, and mutton nine dollars, — "Money scarce; plenty of goods; *enormous* taxes." As if to make matters worse, the General Court had passed a legal tender act intended to en-

hance the rapidly disappearing value of the paper money, and during the first month of the following year, 1781, Mrs. Adams again wrote to Mr. Adams, — "A repeal of the obnoxious tender act has passed the House and Senate. The Governor, as has been heretofore predicted, when anything not quite popular is in agitation, has the gout, and is confined to bed. A false weight and a false balance are an abomination, and in that light this tender act must be viewed by every impartial person. Who but an idiot would believe that forty were equal to seventy-five? But the repeal gives us reason to hope that . . . the heavy taxes which now distress all orders will be lessened. . . . Yet our State taxes are but as a grain of mustard seed, when compared with our town taxes."

So affairs continued, until, on the 28th of January, 1783, exactly two years from the day on which Mrs. Adams wrote the words just quoted, her husband put his name at Versailles to the preliminary articles of peace. The long, seemingly endless war was at last over, and now the people of Braintree, in common with the rest of the State, began to feel the full effects of the reaction which followed it. There had been a complete financial collapse; business and enterprise were dead, and labor was in comparatively little demand. The utmost discontent prevailed, and an inferior set of political leaders made their appearance. It was the time which preceded Shays' insurrection. Yet, so far as the record shows, the town of Braintree had now fallen back into the old accustomed ways; the regular town-meeting was held, and the usual action taken at it, the great question of the day, of course, relating to finances, for they were in dire confusion. The valuation for work done on the highways had fallen from the nominal paper price of \$40 a day in 1781 to fifty cents in 1782, and in the collection of taxes a dollar in silver was ordered to be accepted in lieu of \$120 in Continental currency. The schools had been reopened, and, though the Committee of Safety was still in existence, its work had ceased. But there was one subject, besides the town debts and the badness of the times, which now worried Braintree. The General Court had passed an act determining the legal limits of

the Sabbath. Accordingly the warrant for the March meeting of 1783 contained an article "that the town may advise thereon and act as they shall think most agreeable to the Sacred Law of God." When the meeting had assembled, Deacon Holbrook, of the Middle Precinct, was chosen moderator, and a vote was passed "that it should be deemed a disorder for any person to go upon the seats in the meeting-house with their feet." Finally the article relating to the Lord's Day was referred to a committee of seven, of which Joshua Hayward was chairman. The report of this committee was presented at an adjourned meeting, and, after two readings, was accepted and approved. No extract can do justice to it. As the criticism of an individual town-meeting upon a solemn legislative act, it is unique and characteristic: —

"That it is the humble opinion of your Committee that a strict and religious observation of the Lords day is one of the greatest character-sticks of a Christian People, that the supreme monarch of the Universe hath an indisputable Right to ordain Laws binding all his rational beings in an absolute Sovereign manner, that this Great Governor of the world hath revealed to man, that he hath made a special Reservation of one whole natural day out of seven for himself, which (according to the sacred Scriptures and the confession of the most Learned part of the world) consists of twenty-four hours, wherein all our secular concerns ought in the most desent and devout manner be folded up to give way to the more important service of divine worship and adoration, and all our Laws and conceits of things ought to be regulated by scripture and not according to the Philosophy of the heathen or the superstitious opinions or traditions of man and when the Laws of any Kingdom or State co-operate with and are agreeable to the Commands of the Great Law giver, then and only then may such communetees expect to enjoy divine favours and blessings prosperity in this and eternal happiness in a future state of existance, your Committee acknowledge it was surprizeing to them that our honourable Court should at this day when we are just amerging from the horrors of a most barbarous and unparraled war curtail a part of the forth Commendment by tolerating secular concerns or Servile Labour to be carried on six hours of the same to the great disturbance of every sober and Consciencious Person in this State for no other Reasons saith the Honourable Court than that because their are defirant opinions among the sober and Consciencious Persons of the same, Concerning the commencement of the sabath and lest they should be thought to lay unnecessary restrictions on the subject.

"A very slender excuse indeed to whom ought we to hearken to the

Great Governor of the world or to the Voice of the sober and conscientious People, a semmilar excuse once was given by a King of Gods antient People for his disobedience of a special command because he feared the people but the inspired Profits Introgative Answer was hath the Lord as great dilght in burn offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the Voice of the Lord behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of Rams. We cannot conceive that the difERENCE of opinion or the fear of the People ought to cause an abolition of that sacred command ye fourth Commandment but that it ought to have it due extent at one end or the other, perhaps in some future day this sober and Consciencious party may request an other part of six hours more to be abolished and so on, untill that Great and most Interesting command becomes null and void, not by the traditions of men, but by the Law of the State, to draw to a close in as concise a manner as a thing of so great weight and Importance will admit of your Committee are of opinion that a Remonstrance be preferred to the aforesaid honourable Court when assembled that there may be a revision of and amendment of the above cited Law that their be no part of the fourth Commandment abolished by Law but that it may have its full extent as revealed to us in the Sacred Scriptures that thereby the Blessings of him who hath ever held an holy jealousy over his Sabbath may descend on this Continent and on every State of the same is the sincere wish of your Committee."

The next formal instructions approved by the town were three years later, when, in the summer of 1786, the State was seething with that spirit of discontent which a few months afterwards culminated in Shays' rebellion.

There can be no question that individually the people of Braintree then felt very poor. Those who could had borrowed at usurious interest to pay taxes, and now no one had any ready money. The town debt apparently was not large, for a few thousand dollars in hard money would have discharged the whole of it. There was, for instance, the amount of £150 already referred to as due to the estate of Colonel Quincy, which ran along for sixteen years, from 1775 to 1791. There was another of £84 due to Capt. John Vinton, which was adjusted, in 1786, only after "extraordinary trouble and expense." Another note of £84 was in the hands of Deacon Moses French. In 1791 the treasurer was authorized to borrow a sum not exceeding two hundred pounds for the purpose of discharging the town debts. Each of these settlements was attended with much vexatious litigation. The lenders had first taken the selectmen's security for the repayment of their

loans, and afterwards time-notes of the town treasurer. The currency had then depreciated. The collectors had been unable to get the taxes in, and had defaulted. One owed the town a balance of nearly two hundred and fifty pounds. This was in 1785. Again, in 1791, John Vinton, as one of the bondsmen of Gaius Thayer, then collector, came forward in town-meeting and announced that Thayer was likely to fall short in his payments, and was then in the hands of an officer on two executions issued by the town treasurer; and the town thereupon voted that the assessors should "consult any gentleman learned in the law respecting the aforesaid difficulty." Under these circumstances, seeing no way out of the evil which surrounded them, the people of Braintree seem to have shared to the full in the general discontent, and in May, 1786, after choosing a representative, a committee of nine was appointed to prepare instructions for him. This committee was further directed to present these instructions to the town "for their approbation previous to their being delivered to the representative." Accordingly, at the adjourned meeting three weeks later the instructions were submitted, and, in the words of the record, "were debated upon untill it was dark in the house, and the inhabitants Dispersed without passing any Vote whatever." Ten days later a special town-meeting was summoned to further consider the instructions, and a new committee of five was appointed. The town was now clearly bent on action, for it gave its committee thirty minutes only in which to consider the subject. At the end of that time the moderator called the meeting to order, and the committee submitted its report. The town's representative was thereupon instructed to use his efforts to secure the following results:—

"1st. To remove the Court [State Legislature] from Boston.

"2dly. To Tax all Public Securities.

"3dly. To Tax money on hand and on Interest.

"4thly. To Lower the Sallery of place men.

"5thly. Make Land a Tender for all debts at the Price it stood at when the debts were contracted.

"6thly. To take some measur to prevent the growing Power of Attorneys or Barristers at Law."¹

¹ See the articles in warrant for town-meeting held in Groton at this

This was in July. In September following, three months before Shays' outbreak, these instructions were more fully matured at another town-meeting. In their final shape they breathed the full communistic spirit of the time, and contrast singularly with the better papers of ten years before. A new set of men had come forward in town affairs who could neither write English nor grasp principles of political action. Braintree accordingly now indulged in the following rhetorical bombast: —

"The clouds are gathering over our heads pregnant with the most gloomy aspects, we abhor and detest violent measures. To fly to Clubs or Armes, to divert the impending Ruin the consequences of which would render us easy victims to foreign and inveterate foes. No as Loyal Subjects and Cytizens inflamed with true Patriotism we feel ourselves chearfully willing to lend our aid at all times in supporting the dignity of Government, but in as much as there are numerous Grievances or intolerable Burthens by some means or other lying on the Good Subjects of this republic, Our Eyes under Heaven are upon the Legislature of this Commonwealth and their names will shine Brighter in the American annals by preserving the invaluable Liberties of their own People than if they ware to Cary the Terror of their Armes as far as Gibraltar."

Then followed in ten specifications a statement of the grievances complained of, and the remedies suggested therefor. These it is needless to repeat. What the people really objected to was paying their debts. The machinery through which debts were collected was consequently peculiarly obnoxious to them. In regard to it they expressed themselves as follows: —

"2dly. That the Court of Common Pleas and the General sessions of the Peace be removed in perpetuum rei Memoriam.

"6thly. We humbly request that there may be such Laws compiled as may crush or at least put a proper check or restraint on that order of Gentlemen denominated Lawyers the completion of whos modern conduct appears to us to tend rather to the distruction than the preservation of this Commonwealth."

Yet in this matter, also, the town-meeting would seem to have served as a safety-valve. The discontent, for which some ground did exist, there found expression and the peo-time, *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.* Series II. i. 299-300; and the causes of public discontent enumerated in the published memorial of the Worcester county convention which met at Leicester, August 15, six weeks after the town-meeting in Braintree. Barry, *Massachusetts*, iii. 225.

ple felt better for it. The spirit of dissatisfaction at least had its say, and afterwards, when the time for decisive action came, the town arrayed itself on the right side. In December came news of the disturbances in the western counties, and the adjournment of courts confronted by bayonets and hickory clubs. On the 12th of January Governor Bowdoin's appeal to law-abiding citizens was issued, and the Suffolk militia were called out. In a few hours a company was organized at Brackett's Corner, in Braintree North Precinct, and on the 19th of January it marched away towards the Connecticut, as part of Colonel Badlam's regiment. It was composed of thirty-eight men besides the officers, and upon the roll are found all the old Braintree names. On the 22d of the following February these men were disbanded at Northampton, and the expense incurred by the State on their account was £154 9s. 4d.

The vigorous action of the authorities had put down the rioters ; but the depth of discontent may be inferred from the popular odium which seems to have attached to the authorities for so doing. Take Braintree, for instance. In April, 1786, Governor Bowdoin had received there 41 votes,—all that were cast. One year later, having in that year actually saved civil government to the State, he received 40 votes, and General Lincoln, his military agent in the work of suppression, 3, while his opponent, Hancock, had 181. Yet time, in which to let matters adjust themselves, was all that now was needed. Twelve months later, when John Adams returned from England, after nine years of absence, he spoke of the increase of population as “wonderful.” As compared with what he had seen in Europe, he was amazed at the plenty and cheapness of provisions, though the scarcity of money was certainly very great. The industries of the country he found in a much better condition than he expected. Politically the state of affairs was less to his taste, and he wrote that “the people in a course of annual elections had discarded from their confidence almost all the old, staunch, firm patriots who conducted the Revolution, and had called to the helm pilots much more selfish and much less skillful.” On this point the Braintree records bear lasting testimony to the correctness of his judgment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RECUPERATION.

DURING the next few years no matters of considerable importance would seem to have engaged the attention of the town. The people were hard at work repairing the losses of war. The complaint was loud over the crushing weight of taxation, and it was heavy as compared with the halcyon days already referred to before the Revolution, when the tax-gatherer hardly made his presence felt; yet even now the burden was absolutely light. In Braintree, for instance, the levy was about \$3,300 a year, whereas in the later colonial years it had been but a little over \$250; this seemed a large increase, but, after all, \$3,300 a year amounted only to \$1.20 to each individual in the town, while a century later the regular annual levy was \$12 to each individual. Apportioned in this way among the entire population, the taxes levied to pay the war debts of the Revolution were at the time of Shays' insurrection not one tenth part of what has since become customary.

And now, the pressure of war being no longer felt, the old questions which had for years lain dormant again presented themselves. The annexation to Braintree of Squantum and that portion of Dorchester south of the Neponset, and the division of Suffolk County, — both matters agitated long before, the latter indeed sixty years before, — were agitated again. Standing subjects of debate, it seemed as though the town-meeting would never hear the last of them. How best to take care of the town poor was another matter of contention; for the poor the town had always with it. One party adhered to the ancient way of outdoor relief, — helping the indigent at their homes, the way which had always been pursued; another party wished to build a poor-house, and pro-

vide only for those who were paupers and in it. It was the old familiar question of out-door relief, and Braintree was slowly working out a solution of it. At last, in 1785, the party of innovation carried its point, and the town ordered that an almshouse should be built "in the form of a Barrack, to be thirty-three feet in length and sixteen feet wide." But the other party succeeded in having this vote reconsidered at another meeting, held during the same month. The next spring, the almshouse people found themselves again a majority, and they not only voted the building but clinched the matter by adding that this vote should not be reconsidered at any future meeting unless one hundred and seventy-three members of the town were there present. This was a new principle introduced into the conduct of town business. No such restriction on the power of a town-meeting had ever been attempted before, and it is a matter of surprise that no one recorded his dissent to it now. But under this vote the almshouse was built, and the town poor moved into it; the overseer receiving £3 10s. for his services the first year, and his successor £6 for the second year.

The need of a reorganization of the schools also began to make itself felt. In 1790 an attempt was made to divide the town into districts. A committee was appointed to consider the matter, but its report, when it made one, was rejected, and the town decided to go on in the old way. It accordingly appropriated £150 for "schooling" during that year, and ordered

"that there be a Gramer School kept nine months, three in each precienet beginning in the North and so on to the Middle and South, which will include all the time to next march, such a Master to be agreed with as will be willing to Teach english as well as Latten, and also to teach wrighting and Cypering."

That at this time the town felt unusually poor may be inferred from the fact that the warrant for the March meeting of the following year contained an article "to see if it be the minds of the Town that all Town Officers that may be chosen this year serve without any pay from the Town." Though the tenth and last article in the warrant, this was first taken up, and, "after a considerable debate," a division

was called for. Whereupon, the record says, "the House divided. 98 against paying and 99 for paying; so it was Voted that the Town officers should be paid."

The action of April, 1790, adverse to the division of the town into school districts, seems to have caused great discontent in the North Precinct. Those living there felt that they were numerous enough and sufficiently prosperous to have a school of their own. They naturally did not like sending their children, during three of the nine months' yearly schooling, two miles away to the Middle Precinct, and, during another three months, four miles away to the South Precinct. Yet the only alternative to so doing, under the arrangement which the town had voted, was to give the children but three months' schooling a year; and this was what the vote really meant. Accordingly, the question of political separation, first agitated eighty years before and which had now slept for over thirty years, was again discussed. There was an article relating to it in the town warrant for May 10, 1790. After considerable debate, it was then dismissed. In the latter part of that year one hundred and twenty inhabitants of the North Precinct, and fifteen inhabitants of that portion of Dorchester and Milton lying immediately south of the Neponset, joined in a petition to the General Court that the regions in which they lived might be incorporated together as a distinct town. The petition came before the Senate for its action in January, 1791. While it was still pending a Braintree town-meeting was called to consider it.

The struggle between the precincts took place over the choice of moderator, and the record says that "after a long dispute it was finally voted to chuse the moderator by ballot and Maj. Stephen Penniman was chosen by 93 votes out of 152." In other words, the Middle and South precincts were united against the North, and outnumbered it. A committee of six was then chosen to appear before the Legislature by counsel to oppose the division of the town, and its representative was instructed to use his influence to the same end. Nor did the other precincts desist from their opposition to the inevitable so long as opposition to it could be made. The dislike to anything which looks like political dismemberment

seems ingrained ; and, in the case of New England, it is difficult to say which the people most objected to, — the surrender of local independence through consolidation, or the supposed loss of local influence through separation. Action towards either has never failed to awaken a conservative feeling, which saw nothing but political disaster in not keeping things exactly as they then were. This was the experience of Braintree in 1791 ; and in September of that year another town-meeting was held which voted to put forth one last effort before the legislative committee in behalf of the ancient limits. It was unavailing. On the 22d of February, 1792, one hundred and fifty-two years lacking only three months, after its original incorporation as Braintree, the North Precinct was set off, and ordered to be called by the name of Quincy. The act, also, was signed, as Governor of the State, by John Hancock, who had himself been born, brought up and found a wife in the territory thus made a town.

It has already been explained¹ how the name of Quincy chanced to be selected. At the time, the choice was not wholly satisfactory. Governor Hancock was then at the height of that personal popularity which he enjoyed in Massachusetts to a degree which no other public man has since equalled, and there were those who did not forget that he was a native of the North Precinct. They wanted the new town to be named after him. Richard Cranch, who, it will be remembered, had selected the name of Quincy, was at this time, and in the absence of John Adams, the leading citizen of the town, for General Palmer had been overtaken by financial disaster, and was now dead. Born in England in 1726, Mr. Cranch came to Massachusetts before he had yet attained his majority. In 1751 he became interested in the Germantown land speculation, and eleven years later he married the eldest daughter of Parson Smith, of Weymouth, whose sister, Abigail, two years afterwards, in 1764, became the wife of John Adams. Consequently, Mr. Cranch and John Adams were brothers-in-law, and their wives were grand-daughters of Col. John Quincy. Hence, probably, the selection of the name. Mr. Cranch, after representing Braintree repeatedly in the General Court,

¹ *Supra*, 110–11.

had been in the State Senate. Subsequently he was a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, as well as Quincy's first postmaster; but his name is now chiefly remembered through his son and among lawyers, in connection with that series of reports which contain the early decisions of Marshall.

Mr. Cranch was the justice of the peace designated by name in the act incorporating the new town to warn its first town-meeting. It was held on the 8th of March, 1792, and the usual officers were chosen. Maj. Ebenezer Miller was put at the head of the board of selectmen, showing that his former Church and Tory proclivities were not remembered against him. At the meeting in May for the choice of a representative the question of the town name was brought up, and a strong effort made to have it changed to Hancock. After what is reported to have been a long and somewhat heated discussion, it was voted by a narrow majority not to take up the article in the warrant relating to the matter. This settled the question; and the name of Quincy, thus preserved, has since been multiplied and made familiar in connection with other and larger towns in regions which had then hardly been explored.

The political history of Quincy as recorded in the town-books during the thirty-eight years which next ensued shows few points of general interest. It was a period of peace. The people had in a great degree made good the losses of the war, and they were intent on bettering their condition. Year after year the town offices were filled, the regular appropriations made, new roads laid out, and local questions discussed. One generation went off the stage; another came upon it. Richard Cranch and Ebenezer Miller gave place to Benjamin Beale and Thomas Greenleaf. An almshouse was built on the old Coddington farm in 1815 at a cost of \$1,973.18; and when in the same year the town hall and school-house was burnt down, the building which sufficed for both purposes was presently rebuilt at a cost of \$2,100. Through long years the question of where the new building should stand—whether “adjoining the burying-ground,” or “adjoining Mr. Quincy’s sheds,” or “north of Mr. Burrell’s house,” or “opposite the engine-house”—was earnestly discussed. Finally it was placed next

the burying-ground. It was then only eight years since this had been inclosed. In it lay the bones and dust of four generations that had lived and died in the North Precinct. It stood by the side of the Plymouth road, an open and uncared-for common, in which the swine ran at large and cattle grazed. Nor was there in this apparent desecration anything offensive to New England eyes. The gravestones were rooted up by hogs and trodden down by cows; the children played among them: but it had been so from the beginning, and that it should be so now wronged no one's sense of fitness. On points such as these the fathers were the reverse of refined, and before the burying-ground was fenced in another generation had to grow up with a nicer sense of decency. At last, in 1809, a number of the inhabitants bought up the rights of passage, herbage and pasturage on the bit of ground in which their ancestors lay, and, through John Quincy Adams and Josiah Quincy, conveyed it to the town, to be thereafter "set aside as exclusively a place of human burial."

But incidentally the records of the Massachusetts towns of the earlier years of the nineteenth century are apt to be suggestive. They reveal conditions which have a species of middle-age flavor. For instance, in 1792 it was voted in Quincy "to have Hospitals in town for the purpose or benefit of those who chuse to have the smallpox." And again, in 1809, at a special town-meeting, the subject of vaccination was discussed, and, after prolonged debate, the majority decided against it. Piracy, or, as it was more delicately called, privateering, had strong attractions then for the more adventurous spirits. The United States was at peace with the world, but England and France were at war; accordingly, on August 12, 1793, just as the French reign of terror began, Benjamin Beale, Richard Cranch and Moses Black were made a standing committee "to see that there be not any privateers fitted out from this place by any of the Citizens of the United States or others against any of the beligerent powers, in order that a strict neutrality be kept between us and them." Having thus disposed of international questions, local affairs next occupied the attention of the town, and the hours were fixed at which "for the future the Bell tole on Sunday for begin-

ning divine service." A few years later, in 1804, the singers are granted twenty-five dollars "to procure a bass viol for the use of the congregation;" and in 1818, Mr. Daniel Hobart is "authorized and directed to keep the boys in order in the meeting-house on Sundays." All, be it remembered, by formal votes of nineteenth century town-meetings.

The separation of the precincts had thus once more united town and parish, and the political and religious organization fell naturally back to just what it was a whole century before. The town again regulated every detail of church management. In 1810 the selectmen were "authorized to appoint a sexton and to mark out his duty;" and two years later it was made a part of the sexton's duty "to ring the bell at twelve o'clock at noon and nine o'clock at night." The nine o'clock evening bell was the New England curfew, and originated in a real and general need at a time when watches were an expensive luxury within the reach of the rich only, and cheap clocks had not yet been invented. Through seventy years after 1810 the nine o'clock curfew rang regularly in Quincy from the meeting-house tower. In the earlier period also the bell gave the town a great deal of trouble, and was long a matter for town-meeting debate and investigation. In 1810 the old bell was discarded, and a new one ordered of Col. Paul Revere. The result was not satisfactory, and in August a town-meeting was warned to consider the matter. A committee of three was then appointed "for the purpose of examining the new bell to see if they can find out where the fault is in it respecting the sound." Another and larger bell was then ordered; but when it was cast its weight became a matter of grave alarm, and yet another committee had to be appointed to ascertain if the belfry was strong enough to support it. Not until 1817 was the subject finally disposed of.

The church singing was also matter of grave discussion. The introduction of Hezekiah Bass and the "great bass viol" into the choir in 1804 had not been unopposed. Indeed an ancient and conservative worshipper was so offended thereat that he rose from his seat and incontinently departed from the edifice, remarking as he went that "he did not want to go to God's House to hear a great fiddle." But the bass viol proved

merely the edge of the entering wedge, and in 1821 the question was agitated whether it would not be well to have the selectmen hire a "professed Master of Sacred Musick." A committee was appointed to consider the subject, at the head of which was T. B. Adams, son of John Adams, then a man of fifty and a judge of the Court of Common Pleas. Presently this committee made a report, in which occurs the following quaint and suggestive passage: —

"The Association [of singers] is voluntary and not exclusive of any who belong to the Town, and no one has authority to select and discriminate between the qualified, or such as by instruction might become so, and such as have neither capacity to learn or voice to execute in a choir of singers. This is admitted to be an embarrassment and an obstacle to the advancement of the *Singing Society* in improvement, which they all feel, without being able to apply the needful remedy; and as that portion of the services and solemnities of the Sanctuary which depends on their performance is considered by many not merely an act of devotion which may be done indifferently or any how so that the *Psalm* be sung, but as a very delightful exercise, calculated to impose solemnity, and to excite or inspire sentiments becoming the temple of worship, they are peculiarly desirous that an opportunity be given of calling to their aid the talent and abilities which are liberally possessed by the youth of both sexes in our Congregation."

This presentation of the case seems to have been decisive. The town accepted the report, and voted two hundred dollars for the purpose in question, the same to be expended by a special committee composed of the selectmen and "Capt. Josiah Bass, Thomas B. Adams, Esq., and Edward Miller, Esq." Edward Miller was the son of Maj. Ebenezer Miller, and the family had for the time being, under pressure of the "suspect" vote of 1777, abandoned the ancestral place of worship, wisely identifying itself with the people among whom its lot was cast.

The salary of the minister also engaged the attention of the town hardly less during this period than it had a century and a half before, in the days of Parson Tompson. Mr. Whitney had always received five hundred dollars a year, which sum — such was the immobility of that time — had for seventy years been considered "a comfortable support in this part of the world."¹ To this stated salary, fixed by settle-

¹ *Mem. Hist. of Boston*, ii. 469.

ment contract, the town had, by annual vote, been in the custom of adding a further sum of one or two hundred dollars. In 1808 Mr. Whitney asked to have his salary increased to eight hundred dollars, but the request was not complied with. In April, 1811, he addressed another letter to his parishioners on the subject, which is interesting in several ways. It will be remembered that in 1657 a committee, appointed to inquire concerning the maintenance of ministers in the towns near Boston, had reported that in Dorchester Mr. Mather was allowed one hundred pounds per annum; in Dedham, Mr. Allen was allowed sixty pounds; in Roxbury, Mr. Elliot and Mr. Danforth were each allowed sixty pounds; and in Braintree, Mr. Flynt and Mr. Tompson each fifty-five pounds. There were then eighty families in Braintree. In 1811, one hundred and fifty-four years later, Quincy numbered about two hundred and fifty families. Mr. Whitney accordingly wrote to them as follows:—

“ Taking the two parishes in Dorchester, one in Dedham, the Town of Milton, two parishes in Hingham, and the offer they have made in Braintree, the average amount of the salaries they give is nine hundred and twenty-seven dollars per annum. . . . The sum I propose is eight hundred and sixty dollars paid punctually at the end of every quarter; or eight hundred and eighty dollars at the close of the year. It will be recollected that the proposition I made to the town three years since was only eight hundred dollars. In exceeding that sum at the present time I have been influenced by two considerations. One is, as has been already observed, the information I have received from some of my brethren, whose salary is nine or ten hundred dollars per annum, that they can but barely live on their annual income. The other is that you may have an opportunity of exceeding Braintree in the salary you give your minister; for I think no inhabitant of Quincy would deem it respectable to be surpassed in this respect by that town.”

The last argument was ingenious, but the town failed to respond. The committee to which Mr. Whitney's letter was referred reported in most affectionate language that the pastor's request was wholly reasonable, and that his “ salary was inadequate to his suitable maintenance; ” but in view of “ the uncertain and fluctuating state of our public affairs, the great embarrassment under which we at present suffer, and the threatening prospect of still greater, ” a postponement of the question was recommended. A vote of three hundred

dollars additional salary for the current year was then passed. But from this correspondence it would seem not unfair to infer that the change of values and the standard of living had been such that a salary of \$900 in a Massachusetts town of 1810 was about the equivalent of a salary of £90, or \$300, a century and a half before. This it would also be found¹ is not far from the proportionate increase in the cost of labor during the same period.

The "threatening prospect" in public affairs here alluded to was the impending war with Great Britain of 1812-14. Quincy was a Federalist town. John Adams, true to his old patriotic and Revolutionary instincts, was an earnest supporter of the Madison administration, which his son, John Quincy, was then representing at St. Petersburg; but his townsmen were on the other side. Warm passages used to occur. Nearly seventy years afterwards a Quincy boy of that time gave the following entertaining account of one such passage. It is merely necessary to premise that the gentleman referred to in it was a near neighbor of Mr. Adams', and in his time the most useful citizen of Quincy: —

"I remember very well at a social dinner-party in time of the war, when the political element ran perhaps as high as ever it did, that I had the honor as well as pleasure to stand behind the President's chair as waiter. Directly on his left was seated Thomas Greenleaf, a violent Federalist, who was bearing down upon the old gentleman with more zeal than discretion. The President bore it as long as he could, when he raised his left hand and, instead of bringing it down on Mr. Greenleaf's head, which he might perhaps have done with as much propriety, he brought it down upon the table near him with a force that made the plates and glasses rattle, and exclaimed in a voice that could not be misunderstood, 'Tom Greenleaf, hold your tongue! you are always down on me when there is no occasion for it.' The scene which followed reminds me of that passage which says, 'There was silence in Heaven for half an hour.'"

But at this time Mr. Greenleaf represented much more nearly than the old ex-President what was the prevailing political sentiment in Quincy. At every annual election from 1812 to 1815, Governor Strong, the Federalist and anti-war candidate, polled nearly three votes to his opponent's one. His smallest majority was in 1812, when he had one hundred

¹ *Report (Mass.) on the Statistics of Labor, 1885, 201-312.*

and twenty-seven votes to fifty-nine cast for Elbridge Gerry. The second war with Great Britain accordingly left no more marks than the old French wars on the town record-book ; and, indeed, owing to the disloyal and almost treasonable action of the State government, the Quincy militia were called out but twice, marching once to South Boston and once to Cohasset. An absurdly large town bounty, in addition to the State pay, was voted to those called into service in June, 1814 ; but one short experience sufficed, and in December this vote was "so far repealed as not to operate in future." Yet at this time the uneasiness was great in the seaport towns. The British ships of war were always hovering on the coast, and in the autumn a flotilla ascended the Connecticut, destroying more than a score of vessels. Edmund Quincy, in his life of his father, President Josiah Quincy of Harvard College, has vividly reproduced the sensations in those days of the dwellers on Quincy Bay : —

"A general sense of personal insecurity prevailed all along the seaboard. . . . In these apprehensions the family at Quincy had good reason to share. For the estate bounds on the ocean, and the fears of boat attacks and foraging parties which had haunted the roof thirty years before returned again to disturb its repose. Every ship enters and leaves the port of Boston in full view of the windows of the house, and it may well be believed that a sharp lookout was kept up in the direction of the lighthouse. The first naval spectacle discerned from that post of observation, however, was a memorable and an auspicious one. It was the entrance of the 'Constitution' into the harbor, on the 29th of August, 1812, after the capture of the 'Guerriere.' . . . Toward evening the frigate (recognized as the 'Constitution') came in under full sail, and dropped her anchor beside Rainsford Island, — then the Quarantine Ground. The next morning a fleet of armed ships appeared off Point Alderton. As they rapidly approached, the 'Constitution' was observed to raise her anchor and sails, and go boldly forth to meet the apparent enemy ; but, as the frigate passed the leader of the fleet, a friendly recognition was exchanged, instead of the expected broadside. They joined company, and the 'Constitution' led the way to Boston. It was the squadron of United States ships, then commanded by Commodore Rodgers, unexpectedly returning from a long cruise.

"A few days afterwards, Hull, who had just taken the 'Guerriere,' came with Decatur to breakfast at Quincy. . . . This breakfast is one of the earliest of my own recollections. I was a very little child, but I remember perfectly well sitting on Decatur's knee, playing with his dirk, and looking up at his handsome face, the beauty of which struck even my

childish eyes, and which I still seem to see looking at me from out the far past. . . . There was a current belief that the British, should they propose making an attack on Boston, would land on my father's estate or thereabouts, and so take the town in flank. . . . The opinion was sufficiently prevalent with the authorities to induce them to station a body of militia on the left bank of the river Neponset, separating Quincy from Dorchester, which was selected as the first point of defence should such an invasion be attempted. This circumstance materially increased the uneasiness inseparable from the exposed situation of the family at Quincy. As I have already related, every ship that enters or leaves the harbor can be seen from the windows of the house. And as the triumphant entry of Hull in the 'Constitution,' after his victory over the 'Guerriere,' had been discerned from that post of observation, so was the departure of Lawrence in the 'Chesapeake' on his fatal quest of the 'Shannon,' — doomed to 'give up the ship,' but only with his life ; and, with the telescope, the 'meteor-flag of England' could be seen from time to time flying at the masthead of men-of-war that prowled about the mouth of the harbor, so that it was no idle fear which suggested the probability of a midnight visit from a party of foragers or pillagers to that solitary shore.

"One Sunday there was an alarm that the enemy had landed at Scituate, a dozen miles away. The news was announced in the meeting-house during Divine service. The congregation was dismissed at once, and the village was all astir with excitement. The bell rang, the drums beat to arms, and the volunteer companies marched to meet the enemy. It is unnecessary to say that they did not find him. . . . I suppose it was on the Sunday following this false alarm that the militia companies, in uniform, attended service to return thanks for their escape from the assaults of their enemies ; though it may have been after some more real and nearer danger. But the circumstance made a deep impression on my young mind by the delightful variety it gave to the usual monotony of Sunday.

"My father, too, opposed as he was to the war, yielded to no one in determination to defend the soil of Massachusetts should it be invaded by an enemy. He assisted in the formation of a fine troop of volunteer cavalry, called the Boston Hussars, consisting chiefly, if not entirely, of Federal gentlemen, of which he was elected captain. . . . He used to be concerned lest the enemy might land between Quincy and Boston, and thus cut him off from his command."

It was at this time that the town appointed a committee to confer with similar committees of the towns of Hingham and Weymouth, to devise "some measures for the safety and protection of this and those towns against the assaults of the enemy." But the enemy did not come ; and the actual contribution of Quincy to the burden of the war of 1812 was practically limited to the sum paid in bounties, and a special State

tax of nine hundred dollars. One coasting schooner also, owned in the town, while on her way from the Penobscot to Quincy, was boarded off Gloucester from an ambitious privateer out of that port, and, after some "ferocious conduct" on the part of the captors, was carried into Marblehead. What individuals from among the youth of Quincy may have served on the Niagara frontier, or fought in the naval battles of Hull, Decatur and Bainbridge, nowhere appears. The official record of the town in this war is unpleasantly meagre.

The sum raised by taxation for town expenses in 1815 was \$4,000, which covered also the expenses of the church. The growth of the appropriation was very slow. In 1792 it had been £350, or \$1,160, of which £75 had been on account of the schools. Of these there was still but one, — the grammar school at the centre, — while the germs only of outlying district schools were to be found. During the first ten years of independent town life (1792–1801) the average annual levy by taxation was \$1,680, or about \$1.60 to an inhabitant on account of both town and parish; but by 1800 the annual appropriations had increased to \$2,100, and thence to \$3,300 in 1810. In 1820 they were \$4,000. Four years later the town was separated from the parish, and accordingly the appropriation for that year fell to \$2,800. In 1829 it was \$3,500. Perhaps a fivefold increase in forty years. The long period of immobility was drawing to a close.

Up to 1824, the great items of expense were the church, the schools and the town poor; after 1824 they were the schools and the poor. These have both been elsewhere referred to. It has been seen that the cost of maintaining the town poor throughout the colonial period was out of all proportion to what it has been since. In 1812, for instance, \$1,000 was raised for that purpose, while only \$785 was raised for the schools and \$800 for the church. In 1813 the poor cost \$1,665, or as much as both the schools (\$800) and the church (\$850) combined. A reform was then instituted, and in 1819 the schools cost \$1,000, while the church cost \$850, and the poor had been reduced to \$770. In 1824 their cost had been still further reduced to \$628, while that of the schools had risen to \$1,150; but the poor yet occasioned one

quarter part of the whole tax levy. Meanwhile the highway tax did not appear in the estimates at all, for it was still, as in 1766, paid in kind, or, as the vote of April, 1825, read, "For each Day's work one Dollar, for each yoke of oxen one dollar per Day, for each Horse and Cart one dollar per Day, for each plow fifty cents per Day, and for each ox-Cart twenty-five cents per day." In 1829 the total assessment was \$3,668. Of this, \$1,563 was on account of the schools, the master at the centre grammar school receiving \$500, for which sum regularly paid he had, it has already been seen, agreed four years previously to "give up all other business and devote his whole time to the school." The school committee was further allowed \$5 for "ink and brooms," which were all the "incidentals" then recognized, and \$60 for fuel. The district schools were allowed from \$30 to \$120 each. For their services as selectmen, assessors, and overseers of the poor, Messrs. Souther, Wood and Taylor received respectively \$70.28, \$30.14, and \$25.68. For the repair of highways \$600 was deemed sufficient. One thousand dollars, or nearly a fourth part of the whole, was appropriated to the support of the poor.

Such were the simplicity and economy of a town which now counted a population of 2,200 souls, and which was at last rapidly growing in wealth, for its assessed valuation in 1830 exceeded \$800,000. The burden of taxation, when compared either with population or wealth, was scarcely a sixth part of what it afterwards became, and the amount appropriated for the education of each child in the public schools, which half a century later was sixteen dollars a year, was then but three. Without entering into any comparison of the schools or the roads of 1830 with those of 1880, it may confidently be asserted that the years between 1810 and 1830 were in Quincy the golden period of the old Massachusetts town government. Never before had it been so strong, so pure and so systematic as then; never had it done its work so well. It was, in fact, an absolutely model government "of the people, by the people, for the people."

That this was so was due in part to the condition of the town itself, and partly to the influence of one man. In 1810

the population of Quincy was still thoroughly homogeneous ; and it had not ceased to be so in 1830. It was the original Massachusetts stock ; the people were the children of the soil. They still followed the old, simple vocations. They were either the tillers of the soil, or the citizens and tradespeople who did the work and supplied the wants of those who tilled the soil. They composed a single religious society, worshipping in one meeting-house. Each knew the others ; they were almost members of the same family. The political family had not become too numerous. It numbered about 1,300 in 1810, and about 2,200 in 1830. As respects worldly condition those composing it were not far separated. No one was rich, and most of those who took any part in town affairs were well to do. There was no alien element ; that is, no one lived in the town and had interests outside of it. The town partook also of the spirit of that era of good feeling which followed the war of 1812. The old Federalists were then absorbed in the party which supported the administration of Monroe, until at last during the six years 1825-30 the opposition in Quincy never threw more than nine votes on election day, and in 1828-9 it was limited to a single vote. The largest vote the town ever threw before 1831 was 217 in 1824, when Governor Eustis was chosen. It then gave a heavy majority to the defeated Federalist candidate ; a parting salute, as it were, fired over the grave of that political party. Then followed the Presidential election of 1825, and every vote cast (140) was for the Adams electoral ticket. Nor did the Jackson Democracy obtain any foothold in the town during the next four years, for in November, 1828, the Adams electoral ticket, defeated in the country at large, had 140 votes in Quincy out of a total of 143 ; and in the following April, Governor Lincoln had 142 votes to one solitary ballot cast for Marcus Morton.

These circumstances were all favorable to a good administration of affairs. The people were well to do ; but they looked closely to their taxes, and they had a traditional horror of waste. Corruption in public office was practically unknown. The scale of town expenses was so limited that no item was too small to escape notice. The sum of five dollars

unnecessarily spent, or spent for an unaccustomed purpose, might lead to a town-meeting discussion. Prior to 1810 all business had been done in a loose, unsystematic way. The annual appropriations were made by *vivâ voce* vote; the treasurer received the money which the constable collected; and the selectmen drew it out and paid it over to the minister, the schoolmaster, and those who acted for the town's poor. No reports or estimates were made; no papers were placed on file. Everything was done on a general understanding. A cruder, less organized system could not be imagined. All that could be said was that it was natural, and, like most natural things, it worked well under the circumstances. As the town increased, some one was needed to organize such a degree of system as the new conditions demanded. That some one appeared in Thomas Greenleaf, — the natural leader and administrator of a Massachusetts town, and none the less a statesman in his way because his field was small. As a public man generated by the New England town system, Mr. Greenleaf was as typical in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, as John Quincy was in the seventeenth, or as Edmund Quincy was in the sixteenth. The only difference was that the period of immobility in which they lived was closed by him, — "the ages of monotony" extending through two full centuries, of which it has been well said they "had their use, for they trained men for ages when they need not be monotonous." ¹

Boston born, Mr. Greenleaf was graduated at Harvard in 1790; and coming to Quincy to live in 1803, he remained there until his death in 1854. He speedily began to take an active interest in town affairs, and he showed how useful in a local way a man of character, fair parts and good business capacity can always be. He belonged to the class of colonial country gentry; and, indeed, he and his neighbor, George W. Beale, both dying at much the same time, were the last representatives of that class in Quincy. Mr. Greenleaf was a man of property, and, it has already been seen,² a strong Fed-

¹ Quoted by J. A. Doyle from Bagehot's *Physics and Politics* as the motto for the *English in America, The Puritan Colonies*.

² *Supra*, 276.

eralist. In 1808, and for thirteen consecutive years thereafter, he was chosen to represent the town in the General Court. He then became a leading man in Quincy, and so continued until towards 1840, when the growth of the Democratic element superseded him. In his day he organized the town's business, and he did it admirably. Everything was systematized. The change began about 1812, when the charge of the town poor had grown to be a scandal. Mr. Greenleaf took hold of the matter, and caused an almshouse to be built. He was chairman of the building committee. The sum of \$2,000 was appropriated for the purpose, and when the building was completed Mr. Greenleaf reported, with a pride which he did not attempt to conceal, that though no allowance had been made for omissions in the estimates and much extra work had been done, — amounting to twenty per cent., — yet, notwithstanding this, the new almshouse was completed, and every bill paid, with \$84.48 of the appropriation still unexpended. Under his close business management the cost of maintaining the poor was then reduced by more than one half, and his reports on the subject, entered in full in the records, are as interesting to-day in presence of that still unsolved problem of pauperism as they were when written, more than seventy years ago.

Having reduced the care of the poor to a system, Mr. Greenleaf turned his attention to other matters. Insensibly, but steadily, the method of conducting the town business in all its branches was brought into order. In March the annual town-meeting took place. Over this Mr. Greenleaf presided as moderator. The full list of town officers was then chosen, and the various articles in the warrant were referred to special committees. The meeting then adjourned. In April another meeting was held, and the committees on the almshouse, the schools, the town lands and the town finances presented their reports, which were in writing, and entered into every detail. They were all spread on the record. Another adjournment was then had, and in May the appropriations were voted. Everything was thus made public and of record; and everything was open to criticism and debate. As a system, under the conditions then existing, it did not

admit of improvement, and the so-called democratic methods which later succeeded it were a mere degradation of government.

It is needless to say that under the régime which has been described the town prospered greatly. A debt of some \$2,000 was incurred on account of the war of 1812 and for building the almshouse in 1814, but it was speedily paid off out of the surplus which a better management saved from the regular appropriations for the care of the poor. In 1816 the town hall and school-house was burned down. The amount appropriated for a new building was \$2,400. Mr. Greenleaf was chairman of the building committee; and again he in due time reported, with overflowing pride, that the work was done, all the bills paid, whether included in the original estimate or found to be necessary as the work went on, and that an unexpended balance of \$362.61 remained in the hands of the treasurer. In doing this work a new town debt had been incurred; but good financial management soon paid it off without increase of taxation.

Thus, as the end of the provincial period drew near, there was in Quincy a condition of general good feeling and prosperity such as the town had not before known. It showed itself in various ways. John Adams was then closing his long life. The wife who had watched the smoke of Bunker's Hill from the heights on the Plymouth road beyond the old Braintree farmhouse had died in 1818; and the son who then stood, a little boy, by her side, was at the head of the national cabinet and soon to be chosen President. The meeting-house of 1732 still stood on the training-field; but it was old and out of repair. The townspeople began to talk of a new church edifice more in keeping with their increased numbers and wealth. Under these circumstances, John Adams, in June, 1822, moved, as he expressed it, "by the veneration he felt for the residence of his ancestors and the place of his nativity, and the habitual affection he bore to the inhabitants with whom he had so happily lived for more than eighty-six years," — thus moved, he conveyed to the people of the town a tract of quarry-land, from which the material for the building they wished might in part be derived. A special

town-meeting was called in July to take action on this matter, and a committee was appointed to wait on the ex-President and express to him the gratitude with which his townsmen received his gift. They were instructed to say that, highly as the inhabitants of Quincy estimated the advantages that would result from the gift itself, they valued it more as coming from one who by his patriotism had shed honor on his native place, and "to whom, under the smiles of Providence, we are so largely indebted for our independence and prosperity as a nation." So gratified was the old man by this cordial expression of kind feeling that he at once added to his former gift not only a deed of further lands, but the whole of his private library, consisting of some three thousand volumes. Again the town met and spread upon its records further and even warmer expressions of gratitude and veneration.

Immediate steps were taken towards erecting the new church edifice, but not until April, 1826, were arrangements so far perfected that a building committee was appointed. Thomas Greenleaf was its chairman. During that summer, and before work of construction was begun, John Adams died. He was over ninety, and his life thus covered one half of the whole settlement of the town, lacking only two years. The old order of things, like the old meeting-house symbolical of it, was about to pass away. A new generation, with other customs and modes of thought, was fast coming to the front, and it was fit and proper that the transition should be strongly marked. It was strongly marked. On the 4th of July, 1826, the town celebrated with special rejoicings the fiftieth anniversary of independence. It was celebrated, as its sturdiest supporter had fifty years before predicted it would be, as "a day of deliverance, with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations." On that fair, glad day — in the midst of peace and prosperity and political good feeling, with the sound of joyous bells and booming guns ringing in his ears, with his own toast of "Independence forever" still lingering on the lips of his townsmen — the spirit of the old patriot passed away. But he had lived to see with his own eyes that

“ravishing light and glory” the distant rays of which had reached him in 1776, and he had found that the end was indeed “more than worth all the means.”

Warned of the approaching event, President John Quincy Adams had left Washington on the morning of the 4th of July, and at Baltimore he received word of his father's death. He reached Quincy on the morning of the 13th, the funeral having taken place on the 7th, in the presence of a great concourse of people. The following Sunday, when the church bell rang, he went to the old North Precinct meeting-house, and a few hours later he thus recorded his feelings:—

“I have at no time felt more deeply affected by [my father's death] than on entering the meeting-house and taking in his pew the seat which he used to occupy, having directly before me the pew at the left of the pulpit which was his father's, and where the earliest devotions of my childhood were performed. The memory of my father and mother, of their tender and affectionate care, of the times of peril in which we then lived, and of the hopes and fears which left their impressions upon my mind, came over me, till involuntary tears started from my eyes. I looked around the house with inquiring thoughts. Where were those I was then wont to meet in this house? The aged of that time, the pastor by whom I had been baptized, the deacons who sat before the communion table, have all long since departed. Those then in the meridian of life have all followed them. Five or six persons, then children like myself, under the period of youth, were all that I could discern, with gray hairs and furrowed cheeks, two or three of them with families of a succeeding generation around them. The house was not crowded, but well filled, though with almost another race of men and women.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ERA OF CHANGE.

THE original migration from Old to New England ceased before 1640. No steady westward movement of population across the Atlantic again set in until the beginning of the present century, nor, even when it did set in, did it gain any great volume until after the year 1830. It was accordingly remarked by Palfrey in his *History of New England* that probably there was no county in England where in 1825 the strain of English blood was so free from all foreign admixture as it was among the people of Cape Cod. Up to the year 1800 the same thing might have been said of Quincy. The original settlers bore all of them English names. There were scarcely any exceptions to this rule, and such exceptions as there were — some eight or ten in two hundred and forty — indicated a French and possibly a Norman origin. Such were Decrow, Durant, Despard and Deza; Lamont and Lagaree; Marquand and Quincy. All of these names are recorded before 1728. A few Scotchmen, the prisoners of Dunbar, may have been landed in Boston in 1651, and sent out to the iron-works;¹ but, if such was the case, they did not leave a single “Mac” behind them in Braintree. In 1752 there was a small infusion of German blood, — “poor, suffering Palatines.” But these people mostly went away ten years later to join more prosperous communities of their own race at the eastward, and the Hardwicks (Hardwig), Brieslers (Briesner) and a few more only remained to perpetuate the German face under Anglicized names. There were a certain number of negroes in the town, — sixty-six, according to the census of 1765, — the descendants of slaves owned by the Quincys, Vassals, Apthorps and Borlands; and their

¹ See an interesting passage on this subject in Robbins' *200th Milton Anniversary Address*, 20-1.

names — Pompey, Cæsar and Scipio ; Samson and Fidelia ; Psyche, Dutchess and Flora — read strangely in the old records of marriages and deaths. In a few years more these had wholly disappeared, and the vacant space made by the removal of the old stairway in the meeting-house was presumably without occupants. When, in 1792, the North Precinct of Braintree was set off as Quincy, the names appended to the petition were all English names, — names, nearly every one of which had appeared in the town-book for a century, — Cleverly, Newcomb, Brackett, Adams, Crane, Vesey, Spear, Savill, Bicknell, Quincy, Marsh, Beale, Glover, Crosby, Baxter, Sanders, Field, Faxon, Hayden, Bass, Tirrell and Nightingale. They were Johns, Samuels, Benjamins, Fredericks, Daniels and Ebenezers. Their wives were Marys, Anns, Elizas, with here and there a Mehitabel, a Patience and an Abigail. Old, familiar English patronymics all. An Irishman or an Irish name was as strange and as much a matter of wonderment as a Frenchman or a German, and more than an African or Indian. No mass was ever celebrated in Old Braintree ; and it may well be questioned whether from the day when Sir Christopher Gardiner took flight in March, 1631, down to the year 1800 a single Roman Catholic had dwelt in the town. Indeed, when John Adams in 1765 was writing in Braintree his Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law, he referred to a certain thing as being “as rare an appearance as a Roman Catholic, — that is, as rare as a comet or an earthquake.”

Nor had there as yet been anything to cause the influx of a new population. Even down to 1825 the industries of the town had not multiplied. It was still the old farming community already described, — a community made up of those who tilled the soil, and those who supplied the tillers' wants. More than a century and a half before an iron foundry had been established in “the Woods,” as what is now West Quincy was called, but it had soon collapsed, for “it was found that every pound of iron made cost more than two pounds imported from Europe ;” and only beds of cinders and slag, and old bits of petrified foundation on the banks of Furnace Brook marked where the experiment had failed.

Even the tradition of it had died away, and as late as 1699 John Marshall wrote in his diary that "the woods swarmed much with bears — many were killed, and more escaped" — while for years afterward the region thereabout was the haunt of the deer. Again, shortly after 1750, the poor refugees who settled at Germantown had sought to gain a living by making glass. But such glass as they made was of the coarsest description, for which even then there was small demand; and this attempt soon shared the fate of the iron-works. The little capital ventured in it was lost.

But these were premature attempts at the introduction of strange industries. It was not so with ship-building. The dwellers along Quincy Bay, in common with all other seaboard Yankees, took naturally and kindly to the water, and from an early day the ship-yards thrived at Braintree. In 1696 the *Unity* was launched at what is now Quincy Neck, and later the Haydens, Southers and Josselyns were noted shipwrights. Their yards were at Bent's (now Quincy) Point, and there, in September, 1789, was launched the *Massachusetts*, pierced for thirty-six guns, and intended for the Canton trade. This was supposed to be the largest ship, up to that time, built in the State. Her company for her first and only voyage from Quincy numbered seventy hands all told, forty-two of whom were seamen; but her voyage was not a success, and she was sold in China to go under the Danish flag. But none the less, the Bent's Point yards in 1825 were prospering, and they continued to prosper down to the days of Deacon George Thomas, who built clippers the names of which were famous in the California and China trade. Indeed, from force of habit apparently, Deacon Thomas went on building great wooden ships until he was more than fourscore of years of age, and his country had ceased to boast a commercial marine.

The stone deposits of the town had, up to 1825, rested wholly undeveloped; from that year the change dates. On behalf of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, Gridley Bryant, of Scituate, then bought a quarry in West Quincy, the stone of which had already been examined and approved by Solomon Willard, and which has since been known as the

Bunker Hill Quarry. The fame of Quincy granite was now to spread far and wide. Not that the existence and durable character of the stone had not long been known ; but up to this time it had been worked only on the surface. The coarse, rough, glacier-tumbled boulders which lay scattered over the north and south commons had alone been used. King's Chapel was built of this material between 1749 and 1752, and later the famous old Hancock mansion on Beacon Hill, in Boston. At that time they had so little conception of the extent of this syenite formation, that in Braintree much alarm was felt lest the use of the stone for buildings in other towns would exhaust the supply. For years the subject was discussed at each town-meeting, and new measures of ever-increasing stringency — protective measures — were devised to avert the threatened dearth. Accordingly, in 1753, immediately after King's Chapel was finished, a vote was passed forbidding the further removal of boulders from the commons until otherwise ordered ; for, if the drain went on, unchecked, there would not be enough stone in Braintree for the town's own use ! The difficulty seems to have been that, with the tools then in use, they were unable to work into the rock. The King's Chapel stone, it is said, was broken into a degree of shape by letting large iron balls fall upon the heated blocks. At last, upon one memorable Sunday in 1803, there appeared at Newcomb's Tavern, in the centre of the North Precinct, three men, who called for a dinner with which properly to celebrate a feat they had just successfully performed. The fear of the titlingman not restraining them, they had that day split a large stone by the use of iron wedges. Their names were Josiah Bemis, George Stearns and Michael Wild. It was indeed a notable event, for the crust of the syenite hills was broken.

Quarries were then opened, but at first only slowly and in a small way. The men did not yet know how to work the rock, nor had they the necessary tools and appliances. Such stone as was taken out was roughly dressed for use as door-steps, foundations and gable walls. There were two problems still unsolved : one related to handling and dressing the rock ; the other to its carriage. Both of these problems Solomon

Willard and Gridley Bryant solved. Neither of these two remarkable men were Quincy born. Willard came of Maine stock transplanted to Petersham, in Worcester County ; and Bryant was of that Scituate family which seventy-five years before had furnished Braintree its active-minded minister. While Willard laid open the quarry and devised the drills, the derricks and the shops, Bryant was building a railway.

This famous structure was an event not only in the history of Quincy, but in that of the United States, and in every school history it is mentioned as the most noticeable event during the administration of the younger Adams. In Braintree a feebler effort in a similar direction had already been made, but without success ; for in 1824, Joshua Torry, an enterprising citizen of the town, had planned a canal from the neighboring tidal basin nearly to the centre of the town. A committee reported strongly in its favor, and work was even begun upon it ; but it proved too expensive an enterprise for that time, and had to be abandoned. Still the idea bore fruit ; for the next spring another and more feasible project was devised of converting the old Town River, as it was called, into a canal up to the point where John Adams, as surveyor of highways, had, in 1760, built across it his historical bridge. It was an attempt at slack-water navigation. A charter for a joint-stock company was secured, and the people went into the project with spirit. In 1826 the work was finished at an outlay of ten thousand dollars. The scheme did not prove a success. The canal, it is true, was used ; but the business afforded no profit, and years afterwards the affairs of the company were wound up with a total loss of its capital.

The Granite Railway was both a more famous and a more successful scheme. Its projector, Gridley Bryant, has given his account of how he came to construct it, and of the obstacles he had to overcome : —

“I had, previous to [the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill Monument] purchased a stone-quarry (the funds being furnished by Dr. John C. Warren) for the express purpose of procuring the granite for constructing this monument. This quarry was in Quincy, nearly four miles from water-carriage. This suggested to me the idea of a railroad (the Manchester and Liverpool Railroad being in contemplation at this time, but was not begun until the spring following) ; accordingly, in the fall of

1825 I consulted Thomas H. Perkins, William Sullivan, Amos Lawrence, Isaac P. Davis, and David Moody, all of Boston, in reference to it. These gentlemen thought the project visionary and chimerical; but, being anxious to aid the Bunker Hill Monument, consented that I might see what could be done. I awaited the meeting of our Legislature in the winter of 1825-26, and, after every delay and obstruction that could be thrown in the way, I finally obtained a charter, although there was great opposition in the House. The questions were asked, 'What do we know about railroads? Who ever heard of such a thing? Is it right to take people's land for a project that no one knows anything about? We have corporations enough already!' Such and similar objections were made, and various restrictions were imposed; but it finally passed by a small majority only. Unfavorable as the charter was, it was admitted that it was obtained by my exertions; but it was owing to the munificence and public spirit of Colonel T. H. Perkins that we were indebted for the whole enterprise. None of the first-named gentlemen ever paid any assessments, and the whole stock finally fell into the hands of Colonel Perkins. . . . I surveyed several routes from the quarry purchased (called the Bunker Hill Quarry) to the nearest tide-water, and finally the present location was decided upon. I commenced the work on the first day of April, 1826, and on the seventh day of October following the first train of cars passed over the whole length of the road."¹

At the time Bryant's work excited an almost unequalled interest throughout the country. It was, in fact, a pioneer American undertaking, the originator of which had closely studied that English railway literature which was then coming into existence. Although Stephenson had already, in a rude way, introduced locomotive steam-power on the Stockton and Darlington road, Bryant made no attempt at anything of that sort. Indeed, had he done so he would have ruined his enterprise. His views were confined to horse-power, and he built an improved tramway rather than a modern railroad. The really memorable thing about it was his ingenuity in devising the appliances necessary to its successful operation. These were very remarkable, including as they did the switch, the portable derrick, the turn-table and the movable truck for the eight-wheel railroad car. All these contrivances subsequently passed into general use; and the movable truck, having six years later (in 1834) been patented by other parties, became the subject of a litigation which occupied the courts for five years, and cost, it is said, some \$250,000.

¹ *Mem. Hist. of Boston*, iv. 120.

Though the claim of Bryant as its inventor was sustained, he had no legal right to royalty on its use, nor did he ever receive anything from it. He died quite poor in 1867.

The Granite Railway, including its branches, was four miles in length, and cost fifty thousand dollars. It began at the quarry end with an inclined plane, by means of which eighty-four feet vertical fall was here accomplished in three hundred and fifteen feet of gradual descent. The road then dropped gently down to tide-water level by grades of sixty-six, thirteen and twenty-six feet to the mile. As the traffic was all in the direction of these grades, single horses could of course move with ease just as heavy loads as the structure would bear; the only difficulties being to retard the loaded cars going down, and to draw the unloaded cars back. The road was constructed of stone sleepers, or ties, eight feet apart, upon which were laid longitudinal wooden rails, protected by strap-iron plates three inches wide and one fourth of an inch thick. The wooden rails were subsequently replaced by stone. This railway was operated, always by horse-power, for about forty years. At last, it having then been for a time in disuse, its franchise was purchased by the Old Colony Railroad Company. The ancient structure was completely demolished and a modern railroad was built on the right of way. This was formally opened for traffic on October 9, 1871, forty-five years and two days after the original opening in 1826. There is a certain historical fitness in the fact that, through the incorporation of the Granite railway into the Old Colony railroad, the line which connects Plymouth with Boston has become the original railroad line in America.

After 1825 the granite business of Quincy developed rapidly. Three years later the old 1732 meeting-house in Quincy gave place to that more modern structure which is still the central building in the town, the large monolith columns of which mark the advance which the Quincy stonecutters had then already made. In the same year the Tremont House in Boston was built; and the Suffolk County Court House three years later; then came the Boston Custom House, begun in 1837 and completed in 1849, with its thirty monolith columns, each forty-two tons in weight. As they

were finished these were carried to Boston over the Plymouth road, for the turnpike bridges would not support the weight; and as the carts made specially to carry them, drawn by a long train of oxen and horses, passed slowly through the town amid the ringing of bells, they were objects of deep popular interest and local pride.

It is needless to go on enumerating the buildings thereafter constructed of Quincy granite. For years it was regarded as the best known material for construction, and it was chiselled into the most delicate shapes. A new school of taste then grew up which saw that the stone was not only hard and cold, as well as durable, but that it was wont to outlive its usefulness. The great Boston fire of 1872 showed also that, growing brittle when exposed to heat, it would shatter under streams of water. A change accordingly came about, and granite passed out of use for architectural display, and was adopted in monumental work. At the present time nearly three quarters of the Quincy dressed stone is used in cemeteries; and there is something about it, whether it be hardness or durability or its coldness of color, which seems to make it specially appropriate for these modern cities of the dead.

Meanwhile, the quarry business speedily revolutionized the town. Its influence was everywhere felt,—in habits, and modes of life and thought, and in politics. One by one the old traditions gave way. Business was no longer done as formerly. Firms grew up possessing large means and employing many laborers, and a steady tide both of wealth and population set in. As compared with the statistics of similar growth which has gone on during the same time at the great commercial centres of the country, the figures representing the growth of the Quincy granite business are not large. Boston and St. Louis, New York, Chicago and San Francisco have accustomed the minds and eyes of modern Americans to industrial strides on a wholly different scale. These cities deal in workmen by the thousand and in products by the million. Against such exhibits no New England town can have anything to show which would cause surprise, their figures amounting at most to the modest statistics of a prosperous trade. It is so with Quincy granite. In the hard, slow work of produ-

cing it no large fortunes have been made, no crowded communities have grown up. On the eastern slope of the Blue Hill range, where in 1825 the Milton and Quincy woods still stood, is a village containing a population larger than was the population of Quincy in 1830. The creaking of the derrick, the blows of the sledge, and the click of the hammer are everywhere heard from the week-day morning to its night; and from year's end to year's end the blocks of split and chiselled syenite pass out in a steady stream. Yet in the great aggregates of modern life it all represents but the labor of a few hundred men, and the well-earned return on the not large capital of a dozen enterprising firms.¹ But in this, as in other local industrial respects to be presently referred to, it will be found to be merely a question of scale; and the results of new and extended business enterprises on previous and existing social, economical and political systems and conditions which through the last sixty years have been working themselves out in the country as a whole on the largest imaginable scale, to the astonishment and perplexity of those concerned in it as well as of an observing world, — all these results can, it will be found, be seen and studied in little, in the experience of the individual town. Similar causes have produced the same results; and the transformations, puzzling from their magnitude, which have taken place in the larger stage of the whole, can best be explained, as well as witnessed, in the comparatively simple changes of the single unit.

The period of immobility and sameness had come to an end, and the quickening was felt not only everywhere, but in all sorts of ways; so stone-working was not the only new industry which about 1830 began to make its influence felt in Quincy. For more than a century and a quarter there had then been one tannery in the town, and at a later day there were several. The earlier tanneries were strange, primitive establishments. The vats were oblong boxes sunk in the ground close to the edge of the town brook at the point where it crossed

¹ By the State census of 1875 there appeared to be thirty-seven establishments in Quincy in the granite business in all its branches. They represented a capital of \$588,200, a yearly product valued at \$775,884, and employed 617 men.

the main street. They were without either covers or outlets. The beam-house was an open shed, within which old, worn-out horses circled round while the bark was crushed at the rate of half a cord or so a day by alternate wooden and stone wheels, moving in a circular trough fifteen feet in diameter. In the early years of the last century the prices were as primitive as the methods; for, while green hides sold for threepence and dry hides for sixpence, the manufactured article brought but twelvepence.¹ Then and long afterwards the dress, especially of the working classes, was largely composed of leather, out of which as a material leggings and breeches, coats and shirts were made, as well as shoes and gloves. Working in leather was therefore one of the common vocations in all New England towns, and those who worked in it were referred to in the records as cordwainers, than which no calling was more frequently specified; while Sealers of Leather were officers elected at each annual town-meeting.

Consequently, as markets and means of communication developed, it was natural that the Quincy people should drift into shoemaking. They did so as matter of course, and as early as 1795 the business had taken root. Its founder belonged to original Braintree stock, being descended probably from Deodatus Curtis, whose name appears on the fourth page of the town records; but as early as 1795 Noah Curtis caused to be made in Braintree nine hundred and fifty-one pairs of shoes, paying for such as were hand-sewed two dollars a dozen pair; but not until 1822 was the southern trade opened. By 1830 the Curtises had built up a large and profitable business, and the census of seven years later showed that in 1837 no less than forty-six thousand pairs of boots and shoes were manufactured in the town. In 1856 the Curtises alone made forty-eight thousand pairs of boots, giving employment to four hundred hands. For a time it seemed not improbable that Quincy might vie with Brockton, Lynn or Marlborough as a great centre of this industry; but the War of the Rebellion dealt a heavy blow to Quincy's southern trade, and the rapid development elsewhere of machine-made work left its old-fashioned methods far behind. Accordingly

¹ Pattee, 604-5, n.

after 1860 the business as a whole did not grow in Quincy as it grew elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the presence in the town of this industry, together with that of stone-cutting, greatly influenced its character, causing it to reflect with singular precision the larger change going on in the country as a whole. The population was radically transformed. A new race, of different blood and religion, had come in. The native New Englander seemed to pass out of the fields into the shops, and men of foreign blood took his place. In 1830 the Congregational meeting-house, — though then called “the Stone Temple,” — and the Episcopal church were still the only buildings in the town in which religious services were held. Mass had once or twice been observed in dwelling-houses. In 1831 a Universalist society was organized, and in 1832 the society built for itself a house. In 1834 another such house was built by an Evangelical Congregational society; and a third by the Methodist Episcopalians in 1838. From the time Sir Christopher Gardiner, leaving his wooded hummock on the banks of the Neponset, fled into the forest in March, 1631, down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, there is reason to suppose that no communicant of the Church of Rome had a permanent abode in Braintree or Quincy; and, writing in 1765, John Adams used the expression, already once quoted, that a certain most unusual thing was “as rare an appearance [in New England] as a Jacobite or a Roman Catholic, that is, as rare as a comet or an earthquake.”¹ Even as late as 1838 the Roman Catholics could boast of no consecrated edifice in Quincy. The opening of the granite quarries brought the Roman Catholics in, and the story connected with the first celebration of the Mass in the ancient Puritan town runs as follows: —

“Late in the year 1826 a gentleman called to see President J. Q. Adams, who was then at home. He introduced himself as a Roman Catholic clergyman, and gave his name as Rev. Father Pendergast. He told the President that he came to visit the Catholics of this vicinity and administer the sacraments to them, and being a stranger he made bold to ask Mr. Adams for information as to how he could find the Catholics. The President received him very kindly, and, after some conversation, called in John Kirk [an Irishman in his employ for many years] and in-

¹ *Works*, iii. 456.

roduced Father Pendergast. The news soon spread through the village that 'the Priest had come.' Confessions were heard that night, and early next morning the first Mass was celebrated."¹

A few years afterwards there were many of the faith in Quincy: but they were immigrants and they were poor; the narrow but traditional prejudice against them and their faith, also, was strong, and slow to be outgrown. Even as late as 1855 there were those in the town, and among them was a member of the board of selectmen for that year, who angrily demanded that the elaborate granite gateway of a new burying-ground should be taken down because it had a cross carved upon it;² and the consecration of the cemetery was opposed as a Papist custom inconsistent with the idea of a Massachusetts burying-ground. It was thirteen years after Father Pendergast is said to have made his call on Mr. Adams before an occasional Mass was celebrated in the small West Quincy school-house; and then and long after, under the combined Native American and anti-Catholic feeling, Massachusetts was in a dangerous mood. The Mount Benedict Monastery in Charlestown had not long before been destroyed by a mob; and now in West Quincy those of the district who held other religious views expelled the Catholics from the school-house. Fortunately, better counsels and a kinder feeling prevailed, and after a short time the services were renewed; nor were they again disturbed. In the autumn of 1842 St. Mary's Church in West Quincy was consecrated, and eleven years later, in 1853, St. John's Church was finished, standing almost on the spot where the Episcopal church, removed twenty-one years before, had stood for a century. Another Catholic chapel was erected in the North District of the town in 1874. In 1842 there were about one hundred Catholics in Quincy; in 1888 there were more worshippers in the three Catholic churches than in all the other eight churches of the town combined.

¹ *Quincy Monitor*, May, 1886.

² Pattee, 151.

CHAPTER XX.

THE QUINCY SCHOOL SYSTEM.

IF the multiplication of sects and churches after 1830 was considerable, that of schools was still more so. In the matter of education the state of things had, indeed, then become such that it was obvious a change of system must be made. The old centre grammar school could no longer be made to suffice. Its condition and methods have already been described, and in 1827 the school committee, of which Thomas Greenleaf was then chairman, reported the whole number of children in all the schools as four hundred and sixty-one. Of these, twenty-five only — nineteen boys and six girls — were over fourteen years of age, so early even at that late period did the schooling stop. In order to relieve the centre of an excessive attendance, two winter schools under masters — called in the reports “men’s schools,” to distinguish them from the old dames’ schools for children — had been opened, the one at Penn’s Hill, or the South District, the other at Bent’s Point, or the Old Fields District. This measure had failed to bring the wished-for relief. The increase of scholars from the other districts was such that the centre school throughout the winter had an average attendance of one hundred and forty. Crowded into a single school-room, these sevenscore children of all ages were taught by one master, who was paid five hundred dollars a year, aided by one female assistant, who was paid one hundred and twenty dollars. Under these circumstances the committee of 1827 suggested, not “for immediate adoption, but for deliberate consideration,” the idea of building a second school-house, which, it stated, would “afford an immediate and effectual relief for many years.” Accordingly, after two years of “deliberate consideration,” the town, in 1829, voted to build three new school-houses, one at the North, or Farms District, one at the

East, or Old Fields District, and one at the South, or Penn's Hill and Woods District; the last, being a combined arrangement, was to be of stone, and cost as much as the other two together. In the spring of 1830 the new buildings were finished, and the committee reported that, including the land on which they stood, they had cost respectively \$1,142.50 for that of stone, and \$523 and \$422.02 for the others of wood. This failed to satisfy the town. A pernicious idea had gained footing that it was desirable "to bring the school to every man's door;" and instead of concentrating children so that they might be divided according to age and taught by several teachers in graded schools, the mistaken policy of neighborhood schools of all ages under one teacher was adopted. Accordingly, the next year, after a sharp struggle, in which the town divided by a vote of 84 to 78, it was decided to build two more school-houses. The neighborhood school system was thus definitely fixed upon.

That this should have been so was in some respects unfortunate, but it was probably necessary. It was a mistake naturally incident to government through town-meeting, and merely one more proof that these meetings are not inspired. Having fortunately no infinite wisdom to guide and dwarf them, they go stolidly on, working their way in human and commonplace fashion through almost infinite waste and failure to a certain degree of success. The process is slow and expensive. Accordingly, the policy as respects its schools fixed on by Quincy in the town-meeting of March 8, 1831, remained its policy for over forty years. From an educational point of view it was altogether wrong. The school was near the child's home, but at the school the child learned the least possible. The grading of scholars was out of the question, and incompetent teachers wasted their time trying to impart a little knowledge to many children of various ages. It was like carrying on war through the same machinery; and a more wasteful system could hardly have been devised. From the money point of view it did not cost much, for in 1827 the annual appropriation was \$3 for each scholar, and the neighborhood system only increased it in 1831 to \$3.67. In 1840 it had fallen to \$2.89, and it was only \$3.81 in 1850. Not until

1868 did the annual cost per scholar increase to over \$10. The town had then grown up to the neighborhood system, for its population was about 7,000, and there were 1,534 children in the schools.

Yet even then, though the public schools had for years been more or less graded, and a somewhat better instruction was possible, the teaching in them had little to commend it; and again the unit reflected the condition of the aggregate. The teaching was almost wholly confined to verbal memorizing, and that singular mental exercise known as parsing, or the mechanical application of certain rules of grammar to words and sentences. These rules never had any meaning to the scholars, nor did the knowing how to parse in any way affect the scholar's mode of speaking or writing his mother-tongue. It was the same with arithmetic. It was taught by rule. This was that old-fashioned schooling, so called, which is still commonly supposed to have been simple, but, in some unexplained way, peculiarly thorough. Accordingly there are not a few who lose no opportunity to refer to it with respectful regret. In point of fact, in no true sense of the word was it either simple or thorough. By force of constant iteration, emphasized by occasional whippings, the child did indeed have certain rules and formulas so impressed on the memory that they never afterwards faded from it; but so did the horse, the dog and the parrot. One and the same method of instruction was applied to all, human and brute. It was purely a matter of memorizing and imitation; the observing and reasoning faculties, it was supposed, — if, indeed, any thought was given to them, — would develop themselves. Since the days of the "Learned School-master," Benjamin Tompson, school methods in Quincy had become more elaborate and far more expensive; the child learned more, such as it was, because it went to school more hours, and there were more teachers and better text-books. But, so far as intelligence of method and system was concerned, there had been little change and no considerable improvement. Nor were the results anything to be proud of. The average graduate of the grammar school in 1870 could not read with ease, nor could he write an ordinary letter in a legible hand and with words correctly spelled.

Nor in these respects were the schools of Quincy worse than those of its sister towns. This was at one time confidently asserted; and the friends of every system which breaks down under investigation always assert that such system was notoriously defective at the precise point where the investigation took place. In the case of the Quincy schools it was nothing of the sort. They were, prior to 1870, quite as good as the average of Massachusetts town schools; and this appeared very clearly as the result of careful inquiries made by agents of the State Board of Education in 1879. It was then found that in a very large proportion of the towns in Norfolk County the educational methods in use were the same that had been immemorially in use. They were quaintly primitive. Children were still taught to spell orally and in classes, and the writing was limited to what was done in the copy-books. Accordingly, when told to write a letter of a few lines, many pupils showed at once that they had never been taught even the mechanical part of a written exercise, while certain of the teachers actually would not permit their schools to be subjected to so unheard-of a test. Their scholars were taught to parse, and say the multiplication table; writing letters was no part of school work! Out of eleven hundred scholars in two hundred and twelve schools who used in composition the adverb "too," no less than eight hundred and fifty-nine spelt the word incorrectly. The three words "whose," "which," and "scholar" were given out for written spelling, and while there were fifty-eight different wrong spellings of "which," there were one hundred and eight of "whose," and two hundred and twenty-one of "scholar." For thoroughness and magnitude these examinations were probably never surpassed. They included the schools of twenty-four towns, returning five thousand scholars. The tests, of the simplest and most ordinary description, were confined to showing the results actually obtained in reading, writing and ciphering. There was no escape from the conclusions reached, for the fac-similes of the examination papers spoke for themselves.¹

¹ See Report of Examination of Scholars in Norfolk County, in the Forty-third Annual Report (1880) of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

In 1873 doubts as to the value of the results obtained through the methods then long in use had for some time been forcing themselves on the minds of those composing the Quincy school committee. They referred in their reports to the condition of "immobility" which seemed to prevail. There were now twenty-seven schools in the town, in which thirty-two teachers were at work on twelve hundred scholars. The annual cost of teaching each scholar exceeded fourteen dollars. Since 1830 the number of those taught had thus increased much less than threefold, while the cost of teaching them had increased over fifteen fold. Under these circumstances it was obvious that a great waste of public money was steadily going on. The cost of the article purchased had been immensely increased, without any corresponding improvement in its quality. It was perfectly true the schools had been humanized. Boys were no longer compelled by way of punishment to clasp each other's hands across the top of an over-heated stove until holes were burned in their clothes; nor, supplied with raw-hides, were they made to whip each other, while the master stood over them and himself whipped that one who seemed to slacken in his blows.¹ Scenes like these, worthy of Dotheboys Hall, were reminiscences of the past. But there was no reason to suppose that the children when they left school read more fluently, or wrote more legibly, or computed with more facility than had their fathers and mothers before them. Under these circumstances the committee came to the conclusion that if the town was not spending an undue amount on its schools, yet certainly not more than fifty per cent. of what it did spend was spent effectively. The whole thing needed to be reformed; but the members of the committee did not feel themselves qualified to reform it. They therefore stated the case to the town, and asked for authority to employ a specialist as a superintendent.

In the spring of 1875 the desired authority was given. The result was that reform in school methods which, known as the "Quincy system," within the next few years excited far and wide an almost unprecedented interest and discussion. It was the work of the superintendent then employed,

¹ *Quincy Patriot*, February 21, 1874.

F. W. Parker. Mr. Parker was by birth a New Hampshire man, who had taught school in Ohio before the War of the Rebellion, and during it served in the army, attaining the rank of colonel. He had then gone to Germany in order to study the most improved educational methods. Returning to America, he fell in with James H. Slade, at the time on the Quincy school committee, and was by him suggested as superintendent. The choice was a most fortunate one. There were many qualifications of a superintendent which Mr. Parker did not possess. He lacked business method. He could not always accommodate himself to circumstances in dealing with men. His practical judgment was often bad. He was apt to try to do the right thing at the wrong time. He was impatient of opposition. But, on the other hand, he was possessed with an idea, and he was indefatigable in his efforts to put it in practice. He knew how to infuse his own spirit into his teachers, and he possessed in a marked degree the indescribable quality of attracting public notice to what he was doing. The essence of his system was simple, nor was it in any respect new. It was a protest against the old mechanical methods. There was to be something in the schools besides memorizing and the application of formulas. The child was no longer to be taught on the same principles that dogs and parrots were taught. The reasoning and observing faculties were to be appealed to. The object always to be kept in view was a practical one. A race of men and women were to be produced who might indeed not be able readily to commit things to memory or to repeat rules out of a grammar; they would not be disciplined in the ancient way, but they would be accustomed to observe and think for themselves, and at least to read and write English with ease and decency.¹

Mr. Parker's labors attracted almost at once the notice of educators. He was, of course, severely criticised by the adherents of the old system, who vigorously asserted that what

¹ The leading features of the so-called Quincy system were set forth at the time in a paper entitled *The New Departure in the Common Schools of Quincy*, which was printed in pamphlet form, and passed rapidly through six editions, exciting much public discussion.

was good in his methods was not new, and that what was new was not good. The assertion that the results produced by the old system were not satisfactory was angrily denounced as a slur on the well-earned fame of Massachusetts. Even if such things were true, it was said, they ought not to be published to the world, for they gave comfort to the enemies of common schools. The educational journals referred to the arguments of Mr. Parker's friends as "monumental displays of ignorance," and it required the unanswerable facts of the Norfolk County investigation to satisfy them that the earlier condition of affairs in the Quincy schools was both correctly stated and not exceptional. All this noisy discussion did but spread far and wide the fame of Mr. Parker's efforts, and strangers soon began to come to Quincy to see what the thing amounted to. Then they came to study it. Finally, the town schools became an educational curiosity for the display to the world of the new system. Visitors trooped to Quincy by hundreds, and at times they crowded the school-rooms. It became, indeed, a serious hindrance to instruction, and had to be regulated by the committee.

For five years Mr. Parker held the position of superintendent. In the spring of 1880 he was chosen one of the school supervisors of Boston, and subsequently he became the head of the Cook County Normal School of Illinois. But he did not leave Quincy until the reforms he had instituted there had become firmly established. He was succeeded by one of the grammar-school teachers whom he had himself educated in his system. The schools of Quincy were then full of life and promise, and the educational advantages of the town were considerable. A high school had been established in 1852, and the Adams Academy had been opened in 1872. The last was the institution endowed by John Adams half a century before. During the intermediate time funds had been slowly accumulating, and the academy building was placed, as the founder directed it should be, on the exact site of the house in which John Hancock was born.

Nor were the means of acquiring a higher education in Quincy now limited to its schools and academies. The way to self-culture had been thrown wide open to every one who

wished to tread it, for a free access to books was no longer the exclusive privilege of the rich or the educated. In 1871 the sum of \$2,500 was at the annual town-meeting voted towards the establishment of a free public library, provided an equal sum could be raised by private subscription. At that time the town practically had no collection of books in it which was open to all. The Quincy Lyceum, which dated from 1829, and after it the Adams Literary Association, had, to a limited extent, supplied the need; but their means were small and their organization incomplete. Accordingly, as it had been in the beginning so it remained down to the year 1846, when, for those who could afford to buy, the railroad made the bookstores of the city accessible. But, so far as the bulk of inhabitants were concerned, they neither had any books within their reach, nor did they know how to use them. The purpose of John Adams in giving his library to the town had wholly failed of accomplishment. When he did it he had his own youth in mind. He had been brought up in the Braintree of former days, a country lad wholly cut off from the means of a larger education. He had thus been compelled to break out his own way to success, and his wish in old age was to remove the obstacles which had impeded him from the path of future generations of his townsmen. Out of narrow means he accordingly endowed an academy, and he gave to it his own library, the collection of a lifetime. His motives were generous, but he could not foresee the changes of the future. The books thus given by him were, many of them, most rare and valuable; but students were few, and they found what they wanted more easily elsewhere. For popular use the collection was almost ludicrously inappropriate. The scholar and the public man would feel at home in it, but to the average frequenter of the modern public library it was much what a rare edition of Shakespeare or of Milton is to one as yet untaught to read.

This the town did not realize at the time the gift was made, and votes were passed for the appointment of a librarian and the arrangement of the books so that all who wished so to do might consult them. The collection then remained uncared for, and accessible to every one for nearly thirty years. Dur-

ing that time it suffered irreparable injury. Not only were many volumes taken from it and never returned, but it was freely robbed of the autographs which gave a peculiar value to it. Whole title-pages were torn out; and that copies of some of the choicest works ever issued from the press remained un mutilated was pure good fortune only.

Such was the situation in 1871 when the move in behalf of a modern public library was made. The conditional \$2,500 required to be obtained by private subscription to secure the town endowment was soon raised, and in the autumn of 1871 there was opened in Quincy one of those institutions, undreamed of in former times, which may without exaggeration be called the universities of the poor. The crying need which existed for something of the kind at once became apparent. The public library was thronged with young people, and during the next twelve months nearly forty-five thousand volumes were borrowed. Accordingly, it at once assumed a foremost place among the educational influences of the town. For over two years a room was provided for it in the Adams Academy, but in 1874 the rapid growth of the school made a removal necessary. The Second Congregational Society had some years before outgrown that first church building of theirs which stood close to the site of the original stone meeting-house of 1666, and being vacant it was now leased by the town. To it the library was removed, and there it remained until the Crane Memorial Hall was ready to receive it in 1882.

The gift of this building to Quincy was one of those incidents, both interesting and peculiar, which are somewhat characteristic of New England. It came in a wholly unexpected way. In one of their annual reports the Library trustees had called attention to the fact that of the several modern divisions of the original town, Holbrook, Randolph and Braintree each had buildings for their libraries given to them as memorials, and a hope was expressed that sooner or later "private munificence may supply a public need," and Quincy would enjoy the same good fortune. This was in February, 1879, and there was then no reason to look for such a gift either immediately, or, indeed, from any particular quarter. No one had intimated a disposition to do anything of the kind.

A few months later, but within a year, a gentleman with whom he had then no acquaintance came into the Boston office of the chairman of the trustees, and, after introducing himself, opened the conversation by asking if Quincy would like to have a public library building. Very much surprised, the chairman turned to his visitor and asked if any one thought of giving the town such a building. The other replied that he was not authorized to say who he represented, further than that it was the family of one Quincy born, but now dead, who many years before had moved away from Massachusetts. Nothing further was then said, nor was anything more heard of the matter for several months. Meanwhile some reports of the Library and its catalogue were sent to the representative of the unknown family, and early in the following winter he again came to the office of the chairman of the trustees. He now said that the family in question lived in New York, but that they disliked to have the matter discussed, or to be mentioned in connection with it, until their minds were fully made up as to what they proposed to do. In reply Mr. Otis, the gentleman who appeared for them, was assured that the matter should not be mentioned, but the chairman, Mr. Adams, said that business often called him to New York, and he would be glad to meet there the parties in question, if they cared to see him. No name had yet been given. At length, in February, 1880, a gentleman called on Mr. Adams in New York, and, giving his name as Crane, said that he had come to see him in relation to the proposed memorial building in Quincy. He then explained the connection of his father's family with Quincy, and the desire his widow and children had, though they had never lived in the town, to there erect some lasting memorial to him. The result of the interview was that Mr. Adams the next day carried back to Quincy the formal offer of a memorial library hall, which a fortnight later was acted upon and accepted at the annual town-meeting.

Steps were at once taken to secure as a site for the proposed building that lot of ground which Mr. Crane had pointed out as in his opinion best adapted for it. During the following summer plans were matured, and the corner-stone

of the new edifice was laid on the 22d of February, 1881. It was formally dedicated on the 30th of May, 1882. Planned by the most original and brilliant architect¹ of his day, it commemorates in a typical way a man who was himself singularly typical of New England and of Quincy. Born of old Braintree stock, Thomas Crane had gone to the centre grammar school, and worshipped in the old North Precinct meeting-house until he became a man. He had then in the year 1827 gone away, as so many others went then and later, seeking his fortune. A stone-cutter by trade, he settled in New York city, and there married and had children. A plain, straightforward, energetic man, he gradually amassed a fortune, and at last died in New York, April 1, 1875, in his seventy-second year. Though he often came back to Quincy as a visitor, he never was an inhabitant of the town from the time he left it in 1827. The members of his family had few associations with it. Yet when the husband and father died, their thoughts turned to Quincy as the place where he would most have desired to have his memorial stand. It seemed proper also that it should stand there; for, of all the many young men who early and late had gone out from the town, Thomas Crane had been the most successful. Dealing all his life in the granite which underlaid his native place, his success had been due to the possession of those qualities which made New England. He was honest; he was temperate; he was religious; he was energetic and enterprising and patient. His life was wholly unassuming, and when he died not many in Quincy remembered that such an one had ever lived there. His name is now and will long be a household word in the place where he passed his youth, and from which he went forth; nor could a better example of native strength and homely virtues be held up before its children for imitation.

¹ Henry Hobson Richardson; born 1838; graduated at Harvard, 1859; died 1886.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ALIEN INFUSION.

THERE is a degree of individuality in the business history of Quincy since the year 1830, and consequently a certain interest attaches to it, owing to the fact that it centred mainly in the syenite which underlaid the soil. The town dealt in its native stone. The religious development had also a certain character of its own. It was liberal. Indeed, the utter absence of Calvinism, or strong orthodoxy, in the tenets of those inhabiting the North Precinct and Quincy, is so marked, and so unusual for a Massachusetts community, that it cannot escape notice. When the Unitarian movement took place under Channing's lead, it has already been seen that it excited no surprise among those who recalled the teachings of Lemuel Briant. On the contrary, the tendency in Quincy then was towards Universalism. Thomas Crane, for instance, feeling a strong religious craving which the teachings of Mr. Whitney did not satisfy, found what he needed, not in the Braintree church, where Dr. Storrs still held up the rigid belief of the fathers, but in the broader Christianity of "Father" Hosea Ballou. The young stone-cutter would walk twenty miles of a Sunday to listen to his favorite preacher. No Orthodox church ever struck root in Quincy. In matters of education the individuality of the town was less marked. The schools were much like the schools elsewhere, and the sudden development of the "Quincy system" came from without, and was largely a matter of chance. None the less, it was something that such a movement was possible. It showed a mental receptiveness, a faculty of accepting new ideas and responding to them, which was in keeping with the whole religious and political record of the community which John Wheelright had first taught. The soil was kindly to the

reformer, and his labors brought forth speedy fruits. Politically, also, the later history of Quincy was not without its individuality and significance. The old and new elements were always at work in it. Sometimes the one would attain a mastery, and its influence would forthwith appear unmistakably in town-meeting, and stamp itself on the records; then the other would by degrees assert itself, and the ancient order of things would, to a certain extent, be restored. The old political habits and traditions could not be destroyed; and yet the rapid infusion of foreign elements would through long periods of time seem to obliterate them. Absorption and education went on continually; the new affected the old, and the old gradually influenced the new. Again, the process which upon the large scale was working itself out all over the continent, in Quincy can be studied in detail. Here was one of the individual units of which the other was the aggregate.

After the formation of the United States government, all through the administrations of Jefferson and Madison, including the war of 1812, it has been seen that Quincy politically was a strong Federalist town. Down even to the year 1824 it stood firmly out. In 1823, Dr. Eustis was elected Governor over Harrison Gray Otis, the candidate of the old Federalists; but Quincy none the less gave Mr. Otis a majority of 66 in a total vote of 204. Nor did it change under defeat, for the next year it gave 63 majority against Governor Eustis, though his election in the State was a foregone conclusion. Then came the Presidential campaign of 1825, and the Federal party disappeared forever. In Quincy all were Adams men, and they so remained until long after the election of four years later. But now the Jackson democracy began to make its presence felt, though its growth was very slow. In November, 1830, ex-President J. Q. Adams was brought forward as a candidate for Congress in the Plymouth district to succeed Mr. Richardson, of Hingham, who declined reelection. In Quincy Mr. Adams received 76 votes to 10 cast for the Jackson candidate. At the next State election Marcus Morton, the Democratic candidate for Governor, had 14 votes, while Governor Lincoln received 211. Then grad-

ually a change came. A new element had found its way into the town. The old agricultural interest was no longer the only interest. In 1837 more than five hundred hands were employed in the quarries. The greater portion of these were not Quincy born. Many of them were foreigners, especially Irish, and Catholics. More yet were Americans, from New Hampshire. These last were a sturdy, rough, floating population, with little knowledge of town traditions, and less respect for them; and with a strong general disposition to vote the Democratic ticket. They did not live in Quincy, but came down from the north in the spring to get a summer's work; and, at the season of their coming, stage-coach after stage-coach from Boston would be loaded down with them and their baggage. In March they voted for Isaac Hill, or his Democratic nominee, in New Hampshire; and in November they voted for Marcus Morton in Quincy. They were a foreign voting element; but there was also a new domestic voting element which had now to be taken into account. The shoemaking population had greatly increased. This was of a wholly different type from the stone-working population. The day of great shoe-factories and machine-made work was yet distant, and the men and women who made shoes as a trade worked mainly at their homes; but, as an occupation, shoemaking lacked the manliness and robust, out-door vigor of stone-cutting. The shoemaker worked day in and day out in the little ill-ventilated cobbler's room attached to the dwelling, — a room which in winter was heated by a stove and smelled of burnt leather. He stuck to his last; and, in doing so, he talked a great deal of politics and of political issues, thoroughly canvassing all men in public life, from President Jackson down to Mr. Greenleaf, the traditional moderator at town-meeting. The shoemaker was, as a rule, not a Federalist; but he did not vote the Democratic ticket in the same way the quarryman voted it. His was not that rough and somewhat turbulent independence. Intellectually, he was of a finer, keener type; physically, he did not sustain the comparison well. He was apt to be round-shouldered and hollow-chested, thin and long-limbed. He lacked the muscle of the stone-cutter. In politics he was inclined to admire what he called "smartness"

rather than grasp ; and, though he would not vote for a convicted knave, he felt a good deal of lurking kindness for the successful rascal, and an absolute contempt for the well-intentioned dolt. He loved political intrigue and combination, and could be depended upon by the wire-puller ; though he soon saw through the merely loud-voiced demagogue.

Such were the political elements which between 1830 and 1840 began to mingle and contend for mastery in the Quincy town-meeting. First were the old colonial, native stock, living by agriculture, slow, conservative and generally disposed to show much deference to the opinions of the gentry. Next came the quarry-men, composed of noisy, muscular, hard-living native Americans, with small reverence. Then the foreign-born Catholics, who instinctively sided against all settled political traditions. Lastly, the shoemakers, mainly Americans, but disinclined to the old ways and the old leaders ; and disposed to manage things by intrigue and combination, without much regard to precedent. It is almost needless to say that in the presence of such elements as these the downfall of the local gentry influence was a mere question of time. The spirit of democracy was afloat in the land, and the movement which had carried Jackson into the Presidency on the larger theatre, on the smaller was destined soon to drive Thomas Greenleaf out of the management of town affairs. The growth year by year of the vote cast for Marcus Morton marks the advance of the tide. In 1829 he received one ballot only, and in 1832 he had but 20. In 1835 he had got up to 42, and the next year to 148. Two years later the revolution in public opinion was complete, and Marcus Morton polled 260 votes to 172 for Edward Everett, then Governor and seeking a reelection. The size of the vote showed also the rapid increase of the population under the new business development. In 1830 only 138 ballots were cast in the State election ; in 1840 the number had increased more than fivefold, aggregating 700. This, it is true, was a Presidential election, and a very exciting one, — the famous hard-cider and log-cabin campaign. But the Presidential election of 1828 was also an exciting one, in which a Quincy man was a candidate. Yet in 1828 only 123 votes were cast, or scarcely a sixth part of those cast in 1840.

In the town, as in the nation, the process of absorption and amalgamation were now to be gone through with. The inrush of foreign elements had been too rapid. It tended to unsettle everything. Nor did it soon stop. Up to this time the agriculturists — the farm-hands — had been mainly Americans. The Irish now began to take the place of these men in the fields; while the new generation of Americans either found employment in shops and mechanical pursuits, or became shoemakers. The more adventurous and enterprising went to the cities, or sought their fortunes in the West. But the result of it all was a complete change in the character of the town. It was a change also for the worse. The old order of things was doubtless slow, conservative, traditional; but it was economical, simple and business-like. The new order of things was in all respects the reverse of this. The leaders in it prided themselves on their enterprise, their lack of reverence for tradition, their confidence in themselves; but they were noisy, unmethodical, in reality incompetent, and altogether too often intemperate.

Accordingly, neither the business record nor the moral record of the town were now creditable. There was, as respects the first, no absolute corruption; the method of doing business was simply loose. The town debt was an illustration. It was a small affair, amounting to only a few thousand dollars, when, in 1837, Congress passed an act for the distribution of the surplus national revenue. Under the operation of this act no less a sum than \$5,148 fell to the share of Quincy, and was regularly appropriated to the payment of the town debt. It should have sufficed to extinguish it; yet the very next year the debt was larger than ever. The surplus was muddled away. The expenses exceeded the appropriations; the deficiencies were not provided for; the treasury was falling into a system of yearly arrears. So also as respects the moral question. In 1835, and again in 1836, a movement was made in the direction of temperance reform. There was an article in the warrant of each of those years to see if the town would instruct the selectmen not to license places for the sale "of Rum, Brandy, Gin, or other Spirituous liquors." After a sharp struggle, the proposition was rejected in 1835

by a majority of two only in a total vote of 158. At the election of that year 138 votes were thrown for Governor Everett to 42 for Marcus Morton. The next year Morton's vote increased to 148, and the proposal not to license was defeated by 38 majority; nor was it again renewed. The growth of sentiment, on the contrary, was distinctly in the other direction. Three years later, in 1839, Morton received 326 votes to 231 cast for Everett; the Jackson Democracy was in full ascendancy. And now the seventeenth article in the warrant for the annual meeting was "to know if the Town will allow a temperate use of ardent spirits to the Paupers when they work on the road or farm," and by a vote of 96 to 86 it was so ordered. The same year the mysterious disappearance of the contents of a cask of rum stored at the almshouse was made the subject of a jocose paragraph in a formal report made to the town by one of its committees.

The schools also felt this influence. A change for the worse is reflected in the reports of the school committee. This committee dates from 1827, when the law passed the year before took effect, and from that time to the present the annual reports are consecutive. The first was signed by Mr. Greenleaf as chairman, and was a well-expressed, sensible paper. The following is an extract from a report made some ten years later:—

"The school in the Centre District has been less satisfactory. The Committee think well of the literary qualifications of the Master, and were satisfied with the course of instruction pursued in the School and believe that a large portion of the Scholars have made improvement, but the behaviour of a part of the School at the examination was very unbecoming. About half a dozen of the largest Boys distinguished themselves not for their good behaviour, but for their bad behaviour, for which conduct they received the unqualified censure and disapprobation of the Committee."

But the slow phase of transition through which Quincy was now passing is marked more distinctly on the record in the support it accorded to John Quincy Adams than in any other one thing. It is hardly necessary to repeat that the phase referred to was not peculiar to Quincy. It was a popular movement which originated in the West, and spread all over the country. Andrew Jackson was its political exponent. His methods were its methods. The nation was its field,

therefore ; but its spirit and peculiarities can be most closely studied in the town. It is needless to say, also, that J. Q. Adams was no less obnoxious to the new spirit than the new spirit was to him. He had met it before in the country at large, and been forced to succumb to it. He was now to meet it in his own town. Unlike his father, Mr. Adams had never been closely identified with his birthplace. Indeed, from that February day, in 1778, when, a boy of ten going with his father to Europe, he got into Commodore Tucker's barge on Mt. Wollaston beach to be rowed out to the frigate Boston at anchor in the offing, to the time when, in 1829, he came home a defeated candidate for reëlection to the Presidency, — a period of half a century, — he was an almost complete stranger in Quincy. Still, he loved the old town, and was fond of telling how during the siege of Boston he used to go up on Penn's Hill every evening to see the shells thrown by besieged and besiegers, and how he never afterwards drove over that hill without watching the squirrels and wrens running and flying about, whose ancestors' nests he had taken many a time when a boy.¹ So, in spite of the half century of absence and a natural coldness of manner, the townsmen of old English descent saw in him one of themselves. Accordingly, in 1825 the town gave the Adams electoral ticket a unanimous vote, and in the campaign of four years later his victorious opponent received only three ballots in Quincy. Between 1830 and 1836, Mr. Adams was four times elected to Congress from the Plymouth district, of which Quincy was then a part. At each election he had almost the entire vote of the town.² In 1833 he was the candidate of the Anti-Masonic party for Governor, and in Quincy he had 149 votes to 97 for the two other candidates. In 1836 the change began, and two years later Morton, the Democratic candidate for Governor, had 88 majority over Everett in a vote of 432. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Adams still held the town, receiving

¹ *Memoir of Mrs. Quincy*, 209.

² The exact votes at each election were as follows:— November 1, 1830 : Adams, 76 ; Baylies, 2 ; Thompson, 10. April 1, 1833 : Adams, 164 ; Lincoln, 39 ; Doan, 11. November 10, 1834 : Adams, 125 ; Brewer, 1. November 14, 1836 : Adams, 175 ; Lincoln, 9 ; Burrell, 1.

183 votes to 76 cast for three other candidates. Two years later, in the Harrison campaign, Quincy was closely contested. Mr. Adams, owing to his anti-slavery course in Congress, was peculiarly obnoxious to the Democrats. The Harrison ticket had a plurality of 5 votes in the town out of a total of 700, but Marcus Morton for Governor ran 48 votes ahead of John Davis. Mr. Adams, though receiving 20 more votes than Governor Davis, the head of the ticket on which he ran, yet fell 3 behind his own opponent, William M. Jackson, who had 349 votes. In 1842 there was a general collapse of the Whig party. John Tyler was President, and the Democracy was altogether in the ascendant. In Quincy, Morton had a plurality of 31, and Mr. Adams, though handsomely leading his ticket, was again beaten, Ezra Wilkinson receiving 289 votes, or 4 more than he. Philosophizing over this result in his diary, he remarked that "the people are a wayward master." In 1844 took place the exciting struggle which preceded the Mexican war, and Polk was elected over Clay. In his district Mr. Adams had two opponents, and as the election drew near he looked forward "with scarcely doubting anticipation" to his own defeat. In Quincy the vote was close, but the Democrats maintained their ascendancy, though "consisting," as Mr. Adams wrote, "of transient stone-cutters from New Hampshire." George Bancroft, the Democratic candidate, received 8 votes more than Governor Briggs; but this time Mr. Adams had the satisfaction of running over 40 votes ahead of the Whig Presidential ticket, receiving 345 votes to 312 cast for Isaac Hull Wright, his Democratic opponent. The election of 1846 was the last in which Mr. Adams was concerned. That was a year of Whig triumph, and even in Quincy the Whig candidate had a large majority. As for Mr. Adams, he seemed to have outlived the opposition to him, and his parting majority from Quincy was a gratifying one. It spoke of earlier times. He received 232 votes to 213 cast for five different opponents.

Like the others, this last vote in Quincy was significant. To a certain degree only was it personal. The town was entering upon a new and distinct phase of transition which already began to show itself in the election returns. In No-

vember, 1845, the Old Colony railroad was opened to travel, and from that time Quincy became a suburb of Boston. Not, of course, that the change made itself felt at once. The people went on in their accustomed ways ; but none the less, from the beginning of 1846 the country village (for it still was a country village then) and the city were in quick and easy connection. The rest was a mere question of time; and, indeed, it was twenty-five years before the transition was complete. The successful organization of a suburban land company in the northern part of the town in 1870 marked the event. Boston had again, just two hundred and forty-five years later, had enlargement at Mount Wollaston, and Quincy became a species of sleeping apartment conveniently near to the great city counting-room.

In 1875 the population was returned at 9,155, or a little more than fourfold what it was (2,201) in 1830, and the order of change from the agricultural village to the suburban town can be briefly recapitulated. Upon the original yeoman and farm-hand basis the quarry-men had first come in from outside; while at the same time the young townsmen had gone out of the fields into the shop, abandoning the plough and the scythe for the desk and the awl. Then came the Irish laborer, working in the quarries, on the roads and as farm-hand, bringing with him the Catholic church, and combining with the stone-cutter to vote the Democratic ticket. Last of all appeared the dweller near the city, having store, office or counting-room in Boston, and regarding Quincy simply as a place convenient, at which his family lived and he slept. This last class to a very great degree absorbed the descendants of the original settlers, and the whole mass gradually resolved itself into the modern town community. But certainly the change from Parson Tompson and Teacher Flynt and Judge Quincy and Deacon Bass to the modern stone-cutter, clerk and merchant was noticeable. Nor as an historical study were the characters of the several periods devoid of interest, though the stage was small.

The final change in the character of the town thus began with 1846. Less than two years later John Quincy Adams died. The annexation of Texas had then been effected, and

the war with Mexico was over. A new political question had forced its way to the front, and slavery was the impending issue. Quincy was never a pro-slavery town. The quarrymen and the Irish voted the Democratic ticket; but the old native element had always sympathized with Mr. Adams during his long struggle in Congress, and among his townsmen his teachings had not been lost. Many of them were Democrats; but they were the old Jackson Democrats, who had grown up opposed to the local Federalist and gentry rule of men of the Thomas Greenleaf type, and, once they were satisfied that Democracy meant the spread of African slavery, their revolt was a foregone conclusion. But they were slow in coming to that conviction; for these men were closely identified with the leather interests, and the Quincy boot-makers dealt largely with the South. The break came in 1848. The conscience Whigs of Massachusetts then refused to vote for General Taylor, and the Barnburners of New York refused to vote for Lewis Cass. The two factions met at Buffalo in August of that year, and nominated a separate ticket with Martin Van Buren at its head. The political effect of this in Quincy was singular, and showed how the Congressional action of J. Q. Adams had sunk into the minds of the people there, though the majority of them had twice voted against him. In November, 1848, the Democratic party practically disappeared in the town. The Whig party, which had always supported and elected ex-President Adams, for the time being retained its strength. It cast 246 votes for General Taylor, having cast 314 for Mr. Clay four years before. But the Democratic strength fell from 324 to 212, while the new liberty party rose from 68 to 170. Horace Mann, Mr. Adams' successor in Congress, received a majority of 458, in a total vote of 558. A week later came the State election, and the Democratic vote fell to 34, while the Free-Soil ran up to 250, just failing of a plurality.

The work of political disintegration had now fairly begun. The Whig organization was crumbling away, while the Democratic, except in its foreign vote, was honey-combed with anti-slavery sentiment. The Free-Soilers, as they were called, held the balance of power. So things went on until 1854. Then

the general collapse came, and in Quincy it was complete. As usual, the result of political disintegration was at first in no way what those who had been engaged in bringing it about either anticipated or desired. For more than a dozen years they had been working to break up the old parties, neither of which could in the least be depended on when any question of slavery was at issue. Both were afraid of it, and the Democracy were at heart false upon it. To break up the old organizations, and form a new one on an anti-slavery basis was the darling wish of the agitators. Prominent among these was Charles Francis Adams, who, all his earlier life a resident in Boston and one of its representatives in the Legislature, had upon his father's death become a citizen of Quincy. Mr. Adams in 1848 broke away from the Whig party, and was a candidate for the Vice-Presidency on the ticket with Van Buren. He was now laboring to build up the Free-Soil party, and in 1853 he had in Quincy been made the victim of a wretched political intrigue among the foreign Democratic voters of the town.

A convention was then to be held to revise the Constitution of the State. Quincy was entitled to two representatives, and it was understood in the town that the Democrats and Free-Soilers would unite, each party naming one delegate. The Free-Soilers were true to their part of the agreement, and on the first ballot a Democrat was chosen. Mr. Adams was the candidate of the Free-Soilers; but the Democratic party of Quincy, as elsewhere, was largely made up of Irish, and here again was developed in local town experience one of those race characteristics which on the larger scale and the broader theatre constitute problems of history. The Irish as a class never, then or afterwards, liked Mr. Adams, and politically looked askance at him. Just as the native Yankee element, sprung from the old English stock, did like John Quincy Adams because in him, in spite of an outward coldness and restraint of manner, they recognized one of themselves, so the Irish did not like his son, because, Celts themselves, they instinctively saw in him those characteristics of English and Saxon origin which a few years later contributed in so marked a degree to the success of the representative of the country at

the Court of St. James during the trying diplomatic episodes of the War of the Rebellion. Quick of impulse, sympathetic, ignorant and credulous, the Irish race have as few elements in common with the native New Englanders, as one race of men easily can have with another. Belonging to different branches of the same family, the two have for centuries grown up amid surroundings wholly unlike; and when the Irishman comes in contact with a public man in whom the characteristics of New England are ingrained, the small politician and village intriguer finds a rich field in which to work, ready to his hand. It was so in Quincy in 1853. Stories, ludicrously false but implicitly believed, were quietly circulated among the Irish as to the course Mr. Adams had pursued years before in the Massachusetts legislature in regard to compensation for the destruction of the monastery at Winter Hill, and when the day came enough of them were induced to withhold their votes from him to bring about his defeat. It was simply a case of bad faith and village intrigue; but, for the Irish of Quincy, it was locally as unwise and ill-considered an act as they could well have been guilty of. As usual, they had been worked upon to their own injury; nor had they long to wait for the fruits of their folly.

The incident occurred in March, 1853, and excited deep feeling in the town, for already, in the disintegration of parties, the deep-seated popular antipathy to foreigners, and especially to the Irish, was making itself felt; and the curious feature in it locally was that Mr. Adams, by far the most prominent political character in Quincy, was almost the only man in the town who did not share in that antipathy. None the less, the latent hostility, amounting to race hatred, was there, and the occasion only was needed to bring it into violent action. In November, 1853, the proposed revision of the State Constitution, the work of the Convention chosen in the previous March, was rejected, and twelve months later the town was swept from its moorings by the Native American uprising of the year 1854. As by magic the old party lines disappeared. In Quincy the Know-Nothing (as it was called) candidate for Governor, a man not before heard of in politics, received 549 votes to 140 divided among three other candidates. The

foreign element stood helpless. The old party leaders were not so much sent to the rear, as they were left out of sight and mind in the senseless rush. The slavery issue was forgotten in the presence of race prejudice. It was, as the result showed, but one phase of political disintegration; the old collapsed as the new crystallized: but, for the moment, it seemed to the anti-slavery workers as if their labors had resulted in chaos; they had endeavored to inspire the popular mind with the spirit of liberty, and instead they had evoked a demon of hate.

Nowhere did this spirit of intolerance rage more strongly than in Quincy. It required four whole years to allay it, and in 1857, when the Know-Nothing candidate for Governor was overwhelmingly defeated in the State at large, in Quincy he had more than one hundred plurality. Quarry-man and shoemaker united against the Irish. At last, in 1858, the anti-slavery issue asserted its supremacy, and the Republican party came solidly to the front. Even then Quincy, reflecting its unassimilated constituency, worked but slowly back to its moorings, and accordingly, in the great Lincoln campaign of 1860, when the Republican ticket received a majority of 44,000 in the State, in Quincy it had only a plurality. Again in 1862, the year of deepest discouragement during the war, Quincy was one of those towns in which Governor Andrew fell behind, his Whig and Democratic opponent receiving 87 more votes than he. Yet in the State Andrew had over 28,000 majority. Like the constituencies of certain of the western States, that of Quincy consisted largely of different foreign elements, which, while they clearly predominated over the old, homogeneous, native element, yet, from race antipathy, would not combine with each other; and hence came confusion. But, as is usual under such circumstances, time worked a remedy; only, in this case, the arena of action being small, the remedy came quickly, and, in the crucial election of 1864, Quincy at last squarely ranged itself on the loyal side, the Lincoln ticket receiving a majority of 234 in a total vote of less than a thousand. Indeed, all the other elements were then united against the Irish vote and that large faction, composed of the croakers, the fault-finding and the otherwise-minded, which never fails to make its presence felt under the wearisome pressure of war.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REBELLION.

FIRST and last Quincy did its full share in the work of educating New England and the North up to the point of facing and overcoming the Rebellion. It also was not wanting later. Yet, as in the War of Independence so now, the largest contribution of the town was neither in men nor in money, though as respects both the calls were honored. As John Adams was the great contribution of Braintree North Precinct to the Revolution, so his grandson, Charles Francis Adams, was the great contribution of Quincy in the Rebellion. When the war broke out Mr. Adams represented the Quincy district in Congress. He had been elected in 1858, on the final subsidence of the Native American flood, and in 1860 he was re-elected on the Lincoln ticket.¹ In March, 1861, his first Congressional term was just completed, when he was nominated by Mr. Lincoln as minister to Great Britain. In May he left the country, and he remained abroad until the summer of 1868. His services in London are part of the Quincy war record, but they do not belong to local history.

In other respects the record of Quincy in the Rebellion was in no way remarkable. The town did its share. It freely contributed money and supplies, and it sent out men. But of the men it sent out, whether to the army or the navy, there were none who rose to distinction. At the close of the Rebellion as before it, Deacon Joseph Palmer, the Revolutionary brigadier-general, was still Quincy's ranking officer.²

¹ In neither of these elections did Mr. Adams receive a majority vote in Quincy. In both he received more votes than any one else on the ticket with him; but while, in the election of 1858, he had a plurality of 59 votes, in that of 1860 his opponent, Leverett Saltonstall, had 17 votes more than he, 465 to 448, with 7 scattering.

² The highest commission issued to a Quincy man in the Rebellion was

During the war, that is, between the years 1861 and 1865, the population of the town was about 6,750, while its valuation was returned at a little less than four millions of dollars. It could number probably 2,200 men capable of bearing arms. First and last it sent into the field almost one entire regiment, or 954 men, 757 of whom enlisted for the full term of three years. Of the whole number, 39 were killed in battle and 18 died in rebel prisons. In all 105, or one in every nine who went out, lost their lives. Still others were maimed. But a Quincy lad, a member of one of the families the name of which is most often found in the more recent records of the town, fell in the very first action of the war. On the 10th of June, 1861, occurred the affair at Big Bethel, Va., and young Theodore Winthrop was killed. For days after the country rang with his name; nor is it yet forgotten. At the same time Francis L. Souther, of Quincy, was mortally wounded. A mere boy, he was a member of the Hancock Light Guard, as the Quincy company was called, and had gone with it when the Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts militia was rushed off to Fortress Monroe. His companions presently sent his body home, and it was buried in his native town. Afterwards many others were killed or died, and war's mortality became a thing of course. But it was the sudden tidings of young Souther's death, coming in those early days of June, 1861, which first caused the people of Quincy to realize that their young men had gone out to actual battle.

The money cost of the Rebellion to the towns of Massachusetts, apart from what their inhabitants then or later contributed in national taxes, was not large. In the case of Quincy it amounted to less than \$50,000, including the subscriptions of citizens to bounty funds. In 1861 the town owed \$35,000; in 1865 it owed \$57,000. The whole increase of debt due to the war was not equal to one per cent. of the

that of colonel. There were three colonels, Packard, Walker and Adams, the two former of infantry and the last of cavalry. The service of Colonel Adams was the longest, covering three years and a half. At the close of the war he was among the number who received the brevet of brigadier-general.

valuation. Neither was the rate of taxation between 1861 and 1865 peculiarly high, or the increase of it rapid. Indeed, the era of extravagance and heavy expenditure followed the Rebellion rather than marked its progress. Nor was the excessive taxation subsequently imposed the result of an effort to clear off burdens due to the war. On the contrary, the debt yearly grew larger, so that while between 1861 and 1865, the war period, the rate of taxation increased but one third, and the debt but \$35,000, in the four years of peace which followed the rate of taxation increased eighty per cent., while the debt was \$16,000 larger in 1869 than it had been in 1865. Compared with that of the Revolution, the war burden of the Rebellion, whether in men or in money, was for Quincy light and easy to be borne. In the Revolution there was no general government or system of national taxation to fall back upon. The States had to meet the requisitions directly; and the States made their calls upon the towns. Accordingly, it has been already seen that Braintree then sent into the field, first and last, two men out of every three capable of bearing arms, while a fourth part of the whole wealth accumulated through a century and a half was consumed in the struggle. During the Rebellion not two men in five did military duty, nor was the accumulated wealth diminished at all. On the contrary, even allowing for an altered standard of value, in 1865 the town was unquestionably richer than it was in 1860.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TOWN-MEETINGS AGAIN.

THE close of the Rebellion left Quincy a town of nearly 7,000 population, and from that time forward the increase both in numbers and in wealth was rapid. The last vestiges of village life now passed away, and the suburban town assumed shape. This change could not take place without bringing up new problems for solution; and again the experience of the individual town reflected that of the common country, for first and most important of these new problems was that relating to municipal government. It was one thing to manage the affairs of a small village community through the machinery of town-meetings; it was quite another to manage those of a place numbering a population of 12,000. In 1830 the annual appropriation for necessary town expenses was \$4,500. It has been seen how this sum was voted by a small body of men, all knowing each other well, having a community of interest and acting under a usage which had the force of law. Forty-five years later, in 1876, the annual appropriation was \$116,000, and the articles in the warrant had swollen from half a dozen in number to nearly forty. The character of the town-meeting also had changed. In place of the few score rustics following the accustomed lead of the parson and squire, and asserting themselves only when they thought that their traditions or equality were ignored,—in place of this small, easily-managed body, there was met a heterogeneous mass of men numbering hundreds, jealous, unacquainted, and often in part bent on carrying out some secret arrangement in which private interest overrode all sense of public welfare. To maintain in these meetings that degree of order which is necessary for transacting business in a methodical way was not easy, and the multifarious affairs of

a year were to be attended to in a single day. Town officers were to be elected ; the appropriations were to be considered and voted ; the policy of the town on all disputed points was to be decided. These points also included everything, — education, roads, health, temperance ; for, as the result of growth, the functions of municipal government expanded and branched out until simplicity had become a tradition. The poll-lists contained the names of more than two thousand voters. For these to come together as one legislative body, and pass upon numerous and difficult questions in a few hours, would at first seem so impossible that the suggestion of such a scheme of municipal government as a new idea of his own would cause any political thinker to be looked upon as a foolish theorist. The thing was practical simply because it was habitually done. But to adapt the old village system to the new town conditions was the problem which Quincy, in common with many other Massachusetts towns still clinging to the ancient ways, found forced upon it. Nor is the town-meeting in its actual working fully understood. Since De Tocqueville fifty years ago made it the fashion, this New England institution has been often described and infinitely lauded : but it may well be doubted whether one in ten of those who have philosophized over town-meetings ever attended one, much more ever took part in one. Yet, without having done so, it is as difficult to understand the practical working of the system as it is to describe war without ever having served in an army or seen a battle. The ideal town-meeting is one thing ; the actual town-meeting is apt to be a very different thing. To the historical theorist who should attend one, it would not improbably be the rude dispelling of a fanciful delusion. He would come away from it rather amazed that civilized government was possible through such a system than understanding how New England was built up on it.

That the town-meeting, as a practical method of conducting municipal affairs, should break down under the stress to which a dense city population must subject it, is a matter of course. It did so in Athens and in Rome before it did so in Boston ; for Demosthenes and Cicero as well as James Otis and Josiah Quincy were town-meeting orators. Just in the degree in

which civic population increases, therefore, the town-meeting becomes unwieldy and unreliable, until at last it has to be laid aside as something which the community has outgrown. It becomes a relic, though always an interesting one, of a simpler and possibly better past. Moreover, the indications that the system is breaking down are always the same. The meetings become numerous, noisy and unable to dispose of business. Disputed questions cannot be decided; demagogues obtain control; the more intelligent cease to attend. In all these respects, the experience of Quincy afforded interesting matter for study.

Between the years 1840 and 1872 the town-meeting there fell to its lowest point of usefulness, as prior to 1840 it might have been seen in its most perfect form. But during the later Jacksonian period Thomas Greenleaf, and the class of men of which he was a type, lost their hold, and were supplanted by others. They, together with their old-fashioned dress and formal manners, were looked upon as antiquated and out of date. Their simple, straight-forward, business-like way of managing the affairs of the town was not in accordance with the democratic, young-America ideas then in vogue. It was a somewhat dreary period in national history, — the period of emergence from colonial conditions before the country yet felt sure of its own position, — the up-start period, during which, while noisily and vulgarly asserting itself, the United States as a whole was more self-conscious than ever before and continually anxious to know what was thought of it abroad. Owing to the facts connected with the development of the town which have in this narrative so repeatedly been referred to, all these phases of the national drama were curiously reproduced on the small Quincy stage. Not only did Thomas Greenleaf and the other veterans of the colonial time and federal politics lag superfluous on the stage, but they were made to feel that they lagged. If they were not actually hustled off the boards, they were dismissed from them quite unceremoniously and with scant respect. Other men brought other methods; and, while these men and the new methods unconsciously paved the way to better things in the end, they were in themselves in no respect an improvement on what went before.

On the contrary, for the time being the deterioration as respects both men and methods was as marked and discouraging as it was in manners; and it must have required either profound insight into causes and effects, or great saving faith in the future to enable anyone in those days to speak hopefully of the outcome. So far as Quincy and its town-meeting government were concerned, when at last this change fairly took place the business of the town had for years been done in the orderly and intelligent way already described; everything of importance at the annual meeting being referred to committees for consideration, and these committees subsequently making reports upon which the town acted at its adjourned meetings. No method of government could have worked better, for the townsmen were accustomed to it; and this it was which De Tocqueville lauded so highly. But there was another and far from uncommon phase of the system which might at any time have been studied in Quincy during the score of years between 1850 and 1870. Had De Tocqueville then visited the place on a town-meeting day, he would have gone into a large hall the floor of which, sprinkled with sawdust and foul with tobacco-juice, was thronged by a mass of noisy men, standing in groups or moving incessantly to and fro, in and out. There were no rows of seats in the room, and but one bench, which ran along its sides. The men all wore their hats, and many of them had pipes or cigars in their mouths; while the air reeked with odors, tobacco-smoke being among the least objectionable. Quite a number of those present had plainly been drinking. On a platform at the further end of the hall was a desk, behind which were the moderator and the clerk. The town business for the whole year was being disposed of and the appropriations voted. Amid a continuous sound of voices and moving feet the moderator would bring up in succession the articles in the warrant. The custom of referring them to committees had fallen into disuse, and been abandoned in 1852, as un-democratic and not in accordance with what men are pleased always to designate as the spirit of the times. After 1852, accordingly, everything was in the Quincy town-meeting disposed of in a single day and on the spot. It was supposed to be a more

prompt, more energetic, — a more popular way of dealing with business. Accordingly, the disposition which might be made of any subject was very much matter of chance. Certain questions the town, or individuals in the meeting, might be on the watch for. These had been discussed outside, and were or were not to pass unchallenged; but orderly debate was impossible. Now and again some one would uncover and address the moderator. For an instant there would be silence. If the speaker then knew what he wanted to say and how to say it, he would be listened to, always provided he spoke briefly and to the point. If he told a funny story or made a broad joke he would be uproariously applauded; for the comic performer and funny man is a dangerous antagonist in town-meeting. If, on the other hand, the speaker was long, or dull, or pointless, his voice was soon lost in the hubbub of those moving and talking about him. For the moderator to preserve order and quiet was simply impossible. The audience was numerous, and almost no one was seated. Tired and restless, those composing it were also excited and noisy. Many of them wanted what they called "fun," and there was a great deal of horse-play going on. The Dutch auction in the choice of tax-collector was in this respect the episode of the occasion. The office was put up to the lowest bidder. Some one would offer to make the collections for five cents on the dollar, and then would follow bid upon bid, each lower than the other; until at last, amid shouts of laughter and applause, the prize would be struck off at three mills or less on the dollar. Finally the warrant would be disposed of, the appropriations voted, and the meeting stand adjourned. Then at last the moderator and the clerk would get together, and from their notes and memories manufacture a record. A few days later the town would for the first time know what it had done at its annual meeting.

Such a meeting as that described would also be looked upon as usual and orderly; one in which the business had been transacted in a regular way. All meetings were not so. Occasionally there would be an organized faction bent on putting through some job. For instance, in 1844 the town was profoundly agitated over the great question of where the new

town hall should stand. Should it, moreover, be built of wood or of Quincy granite? After numerous town-meetings and many reconsiderations, the party in the Centre came to a quiet understanding with the quarry-men that, if the site of the hall was fixed in the Centre, the building should be of granite. The quarry-men were then to have the contract. Accordingly a town-meeting was held on the 18th of April, all previous action was reconsidered, and then by a vote of 325 to 229 — numbers unprecedented — the questions of site and material were decided, — the programme was carried out. The wrath of the Point and the South at this political bargain and sale was intense; nor did it fail to find speedy expression. Two days later another town-meeting was called. And now the Point, the South and the West combined in revenge against the Centre and the North, and voted themselves three fire-engines, with hose complete, and directed the town treasurer to borrow money to pay for the same. A debt of forty years' duration was due to that town-meeting episode.

When the affairs of any community are managed in this way, it scarcely needs to be said that they soon fall into confusion. Want of method may be democratic, but it is not business-like. Quincy proved no exception to the rule. In 1870 government by town-meeting was there plainly breaking down. A general laxity in ways of doing public business had crept into all the departments. The school committee, the surveyors of highways, the overseers of the poor, the engineers of the fire department, were in the custom of asking for such appropriations as they thought sufficient. If in the hurly-burly of town-meeting these were voted, it was well and good. Those who had the disbursements to make would then keep within the sum allotted them — provided they were under no special temptation to exceed it. If the whole amount asked for was not voted, it would be spent all the same; and the town found itself liable for the bills its agents had contracted. There was no great amount of jobbery and scarcely any corruption, except in the small and more contemptible way; but the soil was being rapidly prepared both for jobbery and corruption. The growth of a municipal "ring," the members of which would live on the town just as parasites live on a dog,

was a mere question of time. The laborer who worked on the roads, the pauper who lived at home while the town paid his rent, the tradesman who supplied the pensioned poor, all began to feel a direct interest in the growth of bad government. As yet the evil had made no great headway, but the sense of official responsibility and obedience to instructions was already relaxed. Officers were disposed to do what seemed in their own eyes "about right," regardless of rule; and the town good-naturedly condoned the offence. The result was that the finances fell into confusion. Every year a liberal appropriation would be made to reduce the town debt, but each year saw that debt grow larger. It rose in this way from \$8,000 in 1844 to \$112,000 in 1874, and a committee then reported that it represented an outlay incurred neither for educational or war or other special purposes. It was a pure deficiency debt. The money time and again raised to pay it off had been regularly diverted and applied to those ordinary purposes, the amount spent on account of which regularly exceeded the sums appropriated by the town.

Such were the facts. It remained to find a remedy. This remedy was found, not then in a representative city government, for the time for that had not yet come, but in a return to the old and correct town-meeting methods; and in this matter the experience of Quincy might be of value to sister towns, for many of them have already found themselves, and others yet will find themselves, in the same position. The younger John Quincy Adams had then for years been chosen by common consent as the moderator of all town-meetings at which he was present. Mortified at the way in which business was done and at his own inability to preserve order, he announced a reform. In 1870, when the town came together at the annual meeting, after the polls for the choice of officers were closed the hall was ordered to be cleared and seats brought in. Then, after the vote was declared, the articles in the warrant were taken up, but not until every voter was uncovered and seated, and pipes and cigars extinguished. Order was thus established, and in so establishing it history was but repeating itself, for as long before as 1782, when on the 5th of March the town-meeting of old Braintree assem-

bled "by Adjournment from yesterday," it was voted "that Every member of the Town Present at this meeting take a seat when order'd to it by the moderator." So, in 1870, as doubtless it was in 1782, when every one was seated and order was established, deliberation became possible. This was a great step gained; but more was necessary. The warrant had now grown to thirty and even forty articles, all of which were acted upon in the single evening of a day which had been occupied with voting. The townsmen were tired, excited, noisy and in no mood to do business. Accordingly, in 1874 a new step was taken, and the town went fairly back to that old system which had been abandoned more than twenty years before. When at the annual meeting officers were elected, it was also voted to refer all the business articles in the warrant to a large committee, which was to subdivide itself, investigate everything, and at an adjourned meeting report its conclusions in the form of votes properly drawn up. These the town would then consider.

The result of this return to business-like methods was remarkable. The town-meeting at once showed itself equal to the occasion. After 1874, for fourteen years, and until other elements of growth, population, increase of business and change of political elements naturally developed themselves, every question was again fairly considered and acted upon intelligently, with full opportunity for debate; the appropriations were carefully made, and all officers required to keep the expenses within them; a responsible government was established. Then, as if by magic, the finances assumed shape. The debt, which for nearly half a century had defied every effort to extinguish it, now fell in nine years from \$112,000 to \$19,000, and then shortly disappeared. Deficiencies were met by special appropriations; exceptional outlays were distributed over a series of years; rigid accountability was established. This was done through an intelligent development of the ancient village system; and it is probably safe to assert that never in the two centuries and a half of town history had that system worked so well, or to such general satisfaction, as during these years when Quincy had grown in wealth and population to city limits.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A LONG BATTLE WON.

NOR did the reform in town methods stop here. It extended itself into other fields. The work done at this time in the schools has already been described; but, while Mr. Parker was busy in one way there, another man was busy in a very different way elsewhere. In the days of John Adams it has been seen that Braintree did not enjoy a reputation for temperance. His labors in that field of reform, and the poor results derived from them, have been referred to. As time passed on, things hardly seem to have improved, and about the year 1820 it has been said the Rev. Mr. Norton, of Weymouth, took occasion of an exchange of pulpits to remind his brother Whitney's Quincy flock of the unsavory reputation in this respect of the town in which they lived; and it is further asserted that "rum-drinking was so common in those days that the discourse made but little impression, except to be ridiculed."¹ Later, the large foreign element which the working of the quarries brought into town tended to make matters distinctly worse. The Washingtonian movement made some headway before 1840; but, even then, when a temperance convention was to be held in Quincy, the use of the stone temple was refused it. John Quincy Adams, being invited to deliver an address before that convention, accepted; and, to their dismay, the parish authorities found that they had shut the ex-President out of his own place of worship. It was too late to retract, and Mr. Adams' address on temperance was delivered elsewhere. It was now that the town voted (117 to 81) "to discontinue the use of ardent spirits at the almshouse;" but still, and for several years to come, the post-office was in the bar-room of the principal tavern, and thither,

¹ Wilson, *250th Anniversary*, 119.

among drinking men, daily went women and little girls and boys to have letters and papers handed to them across a counter which reeked of rum. Then came the period of anti-slavery education, and the minds and thoughts of all were otherwise absorbed. At last, when the Rebellion was suppressed, it is not too much to say that, through its peculiarities of position, population and labor, Quincy was a stronghold of the liquor interest. Indeed, peace was scarcely established, and the wave of sectional feeling had not yet begun to subside, before the town was again Democratic. In 1867 it gave J. Q. Adams, as candidate for Governor, 650 votes, to 348 which it cast for the Republican ticket. For a town to be Democratic on State issues and Republican on national issues — and that was the position of Quincy — meant then but one thing. It meant intemperance. The foreign vote combined with the Democratic vote, and, having the ascendancy, decreed that unrestrained sale of spirits against which John Adams, more than a century before, had so manfully contended.

Where such an evil exists, some man is very sure soon to rise up and protest against it. In Quincy that man appeared in the person of one descended from original North Precinct stock, for the name of Faxon is met with on many pages of the town records, and can be found on not a few head-stones in the old burying ground. Henry H. Faxon was a man of many peculiarities; but into these it is not necessary to enter. It is sufficient here to say that he became deeply interested in the cause of temperance: though, perhaps, it would be more correct to say in the cause of total abstinence; for in the virtue of temperance, whether in drink or speech, he had but limited faith. Very imperfectly educated, Mr. Faxon was not conspicuous for dignity of bearing; and as a public speaker his deliverances were more noted for directness and frequency than for eloquence or correctness of speech. He was known to address the audience forty times at a single annual town-meeting, and hardly once in those forty times did his remarks fail to elicit laughter, cheers or hisses. That he was deficient in judgment it is hardly necessary to say. Yet, though often exciting unnecessary opposition and ridicule

by his methods and the way with which in place and out of place he advocated the reform he had come to have at heart, he clung to it with a tenacity sure to produce results. Many at first doubted his sincerity, but he showed that he was in earnest by the freedom with which he contributed his labor, his time and his money. His attacks on individuals were so open, public and fearless that from the mouth of any one else they would have been sure to lead to blows. Once they did so in his case; and he was often threatened. Much of his security lay probably in the fact that he was not malignant. Indeed, he was good-natured in his enmities. He did not lose his temper, and become ugly and bitter under defeat; nor did he follow up wrongs or slights in any spirit of revenge. He had apparently none of that brooding desire to "get even," as it is expressed, with a successful opponent, which is always the characteristic of small, vindictive and sour-tempered men. Under these circumstances, while in town-meeting, and not without cause, his opponents laughed and jeered at him and hustled him, yet he laughed and jeered in return. So Yankee met Yankee; but the work went on. It was a long, hard fight. Not only was a sentiment of reform to be roused, but a strong business and political combination had to be broken down. The town had become in a certain way a liquor-selling centre, and, as usual, the thing had worked its way into local politics. The reputation of the place suffered. John Adams noted down in 1760 that to be "as litigious as Braintree" had become a common expression; so now it was said that other towns were "as intemperate as Quincy." It was spoken of as "a hard place," and the stone-cutting population was held accountable for it. The evils of the thing also were keenly felt in many households. Mothers and fathers saw their young sons falling into drunken ways. But it had always been so, and the political combination which favored the continuance of the system was very strong. The Democratic leaders controlled the Irish vote; and the liquor interest had a complete understanding with the Democratic leaders. The Irish vote was thus once more juggled into perpetuating a system under which those whom it represented suffered more than any others in the community.

So things went on year after year. But as wealth and population increased it grew plain that it was not only a question of temperance. The cause of good and honest municipal government was also involved. The condition of affairs in this respect already described was rapidly growing from bad to worse. No reform in town-meeting methods would suffice unless the dominant combination was broken down. Then Mr. Faxon found new and potent allies, and suddenly the town was revolutionized. In March, 1881, a Democratic and liquor-licensing board of selectmen was, as usual, chosen. That same year, largely through the efforts of Mr. Faxon, the law of the State was changed so that the question whether "licenses be granted for the sale of intoxicating liquors in this town" was presented squarely to the voters. The result was astonishing. In 1882 there were 1,057 who voted "No" to 475 who voted "Yes." When the thing was presented in this plain way the issue was understood, and the Irish vote broke from Democratic control. At the same time the friends of good government and temperance came together. The town-meeting had been reformed, and now the bar-room was closed. But the length of the struggle against the last is worthy of record. It largely exceeded a century; for in 1760 John Adams described himself, to use his own words, as discharging his venom "against the multitude, poverty, ill government, and ill effects of licensed houses, and the timorous temper, as well as criminal design, of the selectmen" who licensed them; but not until 1882, one hundred and twenty-two years later, did his local successor in that crusade close, at least for the time being, the last of those houses in Quincy.

CHAPTER XXV.

“THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE KING!”

IN his History of the English People, John Richard Green has traced back the origin of town-meeting government to a remote period and a distant region,—the fifth century after the birth of Christ, and “the district which is now called Sleswick, a district in the heart of the peninsula that parts the Baltic from the Northern seas. . . . Of the temper and life of the folk in this older England we know little. But . . . in their villages lay ready formed the social and political life which is round us to-day. . . . The life, the sovereignty of the settlement, resided solely in the body of the freemen, whose holdings lay round the moot-hill or the sacred tree where the community met from time to time to deal out its own justice and to make its own laws. . . . It is with reverence such as is stirred by the sight of the head-waters of some mighty river that one looks back to these village moots of Friesland or Sleswick. It was here that England learned to be a ‘mother of Parliaments.’ It was in these tiny knots of farmers that the men from whom Englishmen were to spring learned the worth of public opinion. . . . The ‘talk’ of the village moot . . . is the groundwork of English history.” But, no matter how ancient or whence derived, government through town-meeting must always remain a primitive form of government, and one adapted only to the needs of a comparatively simple community, homogeneous, and neither too numerous nor with wealth very unequally distributed. Its chief excellence lies in the fact that it is the most perfect government of the people by the people which has ever been devised; and its simplicity is its most striking characteristic. In New England this form of government has now had an unbroken continuance of two centuries and a half,

and two hundred and fifty years are no small portion of recorded history; there are few human institutions, much less mere governmental machines, to which so long an existence is given. But, besides that decadence which seems to be a necessary incident to mere lapse of time, the New England government by town-meeting has limitations in other respects, often experienced and to which reference has more than once been made. Though, as this narrative has shown, admitting of very considerable development, and far more elastic and adaptable to circumstances than would naturally have been supposed, this, like other forms of government, does not admit of infinite development, nor is its elasticity without limit. The requirements of a Massachusetts village community during the colonial period were few and comparatively simple,—the church, the schools, the highways and the poor completed the list. But not only were the requirements of the original communities few and their annual outlay small, but the communities themselves were composed of material of like character, living under conditions not very dissimilar. Those composing it were, in fact, members almost of a common family.

When this is duly considered, the matter for surprise is, not that the town-meeting governments of Massachusetts have during the nineteenth century showed a tendency to break down, but that they have stood the strain to which they were subjected so well and lasted so long. It is now sixty years since the colonial system in Massachusetts finally passed away. It died with the original constitution of 1780; and it was within the limits of Quincy that the building of Gridley Bryant's railway in 1826 struck the key-note of change for the coming time. That the system of town government should have yet survived and worked satisfactory results through the long period of sixty years after that key-note was plainly struck, affords conclusive evidence of its vitality as well as its excellence.

During those sixty years the differentiation in modern town life has taken place. The simple has become complex. The church has indeed been separated from the state; but in place of the one function of which the state as represented in

the municipality was thus relieved, the town government has assumed an almost infinitude of others. The schools have been multiplied no less than the branches of instruction, until even the more rudimentary forms of education have become the province of specialists. The highways are crushed under the weight of a traffic, which, in the case of Quincy, reduces the firmest known pavement to powder, and exhausts the ingenuity of the engineer. The care of the sick, the poor and the insane has been magnified into a science and reduced to a system. These were the ancient and traditional functions of the town, and all of them have through the natural process of development passed in the larger centres of population beyond the handling capacity of the ordinary official, and of necessity devolved upon a class of men specially trained to deal with them. Meanwhile other and new needs have made themselves felt, — the public peace has to be provided for, scientific provision must be made against fire, streets need to be lighted, questions of public health are to be considered, the introduction of water necessitates drainage, the old burying-ground develops into the modern cemetery, the public school is supplemented by the public library, and the training-field and ancient common, having passed away, are now replaced by the park and the public garden. The performance of the duties necessarily pertaining to all these things, calling as they do for almost infinite special knowledge and a complicated financial machinery, was imposed little by little on the old town governments. It was as if an ancient country cart—well designed, honestly made of excellent material, altogether good in its day and for the work then needed of it—was by degrees called upon to do that for which a modern railroad train is required. As a matter of course the cart must break down under a strain to which it was never designed to be subjected.

As it was with Boston in 1822, and has been with many other municipalities since, so was it with the town government of Quincy in 1887. Never had it been better administered, never had it performed its work in a way more satisfactory, never had the reputation of the town stood so high among its sister towns, as it then had for fifteen years. Nevertheless,

those in position to watch most closely the working of the machine could not but be sensible that it was rapidly being subjected to a strain it could not permanently bear, and that its continued satisfactory results were a mere matter of chance,— they depended on the absence of any considerable disturbing element. This could hardly be expected to continue; and when a serious cause of disturbance did occur, the machine, it was evident, would not prove equal to the demands made upon it.

The decree of fate was indeed written in the figures of the census. The population of 2,200, with which the town passed out of the colonial period in 1830, had at the close of the Rebellion in 1865 risen to 6,700; and this enumeration had again twenty years later grown to over 12,000. The whole success of town government depends upon the active interest taken in it by those entitled to participate. A small attendance as the town meetings recur indicates a lack of interest in public affairs; and yet, after population passes a certain point, a large attendance necessarily makes a town-meeting unwieldy, and incapacitates it for the transaction of business. A full meeting of voters is then apt, in the presence of some exciting issue or popular craze, to degenerate into an unruly mob. In the case of Quincy there were in 1885 more than 2,500 names on the voting list, while over 2,000 ballots were actually cast at the election which preceded the annual March meeting of that year. No hall in the town contained space-room in which to sit such a number of people; nor were such numbers consistent with the idea of a deliberative body.

Those composing the body were also no longer in any way homogeneous. The large infusions of alien material which from time to time had taken place in the Quincy constituency have already been referred to, and the disturbance they caused in the practical working of town-meeting government described. Had the increase of population during the sixty years which followed the close of the colonial period (1830–1890) continued at the same ratio as the increase during the first thirty years of the century (1800–1830) the aggregate in 1890 would have been less than eight thousand; in reality it was over sixteen thousand. Then followed the question of

nativity. Of the sixteen thousand only a little more than one in each three was even born in the town, much less came of the old town stock; while a majority of the whole were either of foreign birth or the children of immigrants. The process of change also was still rapidly going on, for, while in 1875 twenty-six in each hundred inhabitants were foreign born, in 1885 this number had increased to over thirty. Even of those of American birth one out of each three, having been born elsewhere, had moved into the town.¹

Thus, so far as mere numbers went, the old original stock had well-nigh disappeared; and, though what of it was left still made itself potently felt, a new element might at any time arise—as such new elements had arisen before—which would in a moment set aside the traditions of the town and revolutionize its methods. All depended on the popular will of a large and growing business community expressed through the forms of an annual election. The time had been when almost every man in the town-meeting knew by face and name and reputation every other man in it, while the bulk of them were tillers of the soil. In 1885 thirty-seven inhabitants reported themselves as farmers and one hundred and twenty-four as farm laborers, while the stone-workers and quarry-men were fourteen hundred in number. The agriculturalist had practically disappeared, while at the town-meeting, in place of the eighteenth century farmers and landholders,—the colonial yeomanry,—there now assembled a great mass of men who, engaged in multifarious occupations, not only neither knew of nor cared for the ancient ways and old-time traditions, but many of whom regarded those traditions and ways with an impatience they were under no pains to conceal as part of the rubbish of an antiquated past. They wanted a new town, organized on modern ideas, wide-awake,

¹ *Census of Massachusetts*, 1885, vol. i. Part I., lxxv. 75, 542, 596. With a total population of 12,145, Quincy in 1885 had 4,372 town-born inhabitants, in which number were, of course, included the town-born offspring of the foreign-born. Of the foreign-born 1,565 were Irish and 573 Scotch. Of the Americans born in other States of the Union 647 came from Maine and 269 from New Hampshire. There were 6,382 inhabitants both of the parents of whom were foreign-born; while those of pure American parentage numbered only 4,632. *Ib.* 596.

as the expression goes, and in touch with the spirit of the times.

The business the town-meeting was called upon to dispose of had grown also with the growth of the constituency and of taxation; the growth of the latter, indeed, had, as in most other Massachusetts towns, been phenomenal and well calculated to excite attention, if not alarm. When contrasted with those of the earlier time, and especially of the last century, the figures indicating the self-imposed burden of the later period are curiously significant and instructive. For reasons already pointed out,¹ the returns of the assessor are, for the purposes of this comparison, worse than useless;—they are deceptive. From them, as data, not even an approximation can be reached. But, while the average accumulation of each inhabitant cannot be estimated with any pretence at accuracy, the average burden of annual taxation imposed on each inhabitant can be stated exactly. The first Massachusetts census was taken in 1765 and Braintree then returned 2,433 inhabitants; which number increased to 2,871 in 1776. In 1770, therefore, the town may have contained a population of 2,700 souls, and it certainly did not contain more. The entire amount raised by taxation that year to meet all town and county expenses was £80, or \$266.66, being a trifle less than ten cents from each inhabitant. In 1800 Quincy returned a population of 1,081 souls, and the total tax levy for town purposes, exclusive of those of the church, was \$2,480, or \$2.30 to an inhabitant; and thirty years later this amount, instead of increasing, had been reduced to \$1.66. That was the end of the colonial period. Thirty years later the average had increased to \$4.20 for each inhabitant; another thirty years carried it to \$11.77. While, therefore, the average worldly possessions of the inhabitant of Quincy in 1890 as compared with the possessions of his predecessors of a century before cannot even be guessed at with any approach to exactness, it is a fact clearly established that the burden of taxation each inhabitant now has to bear is twenty times greater than it was then. In 1790 it was a little less than sixty cents; in 1890 it was a little less than twelve dollars.

¹ *Supra*, 95-7.

Such had been the growth of taxation, and mainly within the last thirty years. The growth of the town business as measured by the articles in the warrant had been hardly less. In 1830 the warrant for the annual meeting contained but thirteen articles, and, excluding formal positions like Fence Viewers, Field Drivers, Weighers of Bread, Packers of Beef, Fire Wards, Sealers of Leather, and the like, only twelve officers were chosen, among them being a school committee of eight and the constable; the total amount appropriated did not exceed \$3,700. In 1865 the warrant had grown to eighteen articles, the number of officials to be elected was seventeen, and the annual appropriation was \$30,000. This was all within reasonable limits, and the growth indicated nothing calculated to subject town government to an undue strain. In 1885 it was no longer so; the warrant had grown to forty-eight articles, the ballot for town officials contained fifty names, and \$120,000 was appropriated. There was, moreover, no recognized executive, — no systematic responsibility for results. In the old days the selectmen had attended to everything; but as town functions increased and special knowledge was required, little by little the selectmen had been stripped of authority until at last the business of the town — and of necessity too — had passed into the control of boards and commissions; — the schools were managed by one committee, and the roads by another; the parks by a third; the cemeteries by a fourth; the library by a fifth, and so on; each of these bodies holding authority direct from the people of the town, and responsible to them alone.

The only thing that could be said in favor of a system of government so obviously outgrown was that practically it worked well. The results produced were sufficiently good; and, in fact, would compare well with those produced under any other system of municipal government which human wit had yet devised. And to say this was to be able to say much. Yet this could still be said; nor could it be denied. The finances of the town had never been in better condition than they were in March, 1887, for it was free of debt, and lived under the established policy of paying its way as it went; its schools had acquired a national fame; its roads were not good,

simply because the traffic to which they were subjected by wagons groaning under the product of granite quarries was such as no pavement could stand ; the peace of the town had never been better preserved than since the bar-rooms were closed ; and, finally, all its many transactions were conducted with scrupulous honesty, — a defalcation or the misuse of public funds by a town official were things which entered into the suspicion of no one.

But, none the less, the change, naturally to be anticipated and long expected, took place in the spring of 1887. What are commonly known as the labor organizations were at that time actively at work, not only in Quincy but throughout the State and country ; and, during the previous winter, arrangements had been made for widespread strikes to take place on the first of May, the object of which was of course to secure to those who worked with their hands an increase of pay, combined with shorter hours of labor. It was well known that these questions had been much discussed in the unions of West Quincy, the region in which the quarries chiefly lay and a community by itself ; and it was understood some sort of an organized demonstration would be made at the annual town-meeting. It of course does not need to be added that demonstrations of this character, organized privately and outside, are the greatest elements of danger to which popular government, and especially town-meeting government, can be subjected. It was so in the days of Athens and of Rome, and it will continue to be so as long as human nature and human institutions remain as they are. Cleon and Clodius are recurring characters.

The warrant for the annual town-meeting for 1887, when issued in February of that year, was found to contain, among other articles calculated to excite notice, the following : —

"ART. 54. To see if the town will instruct the Selectmen, Overseers of the Poor, Road Commissioners, and Managers of the Mount Wollaston Cemetery not to employ any person as a laborer in their respective departments unless he be a resident of the town.

"ART. 55. To see if the town will vote that not less than two dollars per day shall be paid to the employees of the town for the ensuing year.

"ART. 56. To see if the town will vote that nine hours shall constitute a day's work for all employees of the town."

When these articles were read in the warrant, it was well understood that the old order of things, and the management of town affairs which had become traditional, were challenged and on trial. Nevertheless, at the first day of the meeting, when the voting took place and the general committee to consider the articles in the warrant was appointed, things proceeded in the usual way. John Quincy Adams was chosen moderator; the committee on the warrant was made up wholly irrespective of party, and contained the usual names of men well known in the town; and the vote against the licensing of liquor shops was even more decisive than it had been the year before, — or very nearly three to one. Nothing so far indicated any unusual popular movement. Three weeks later the adjourned meeting was to be held, at which the committee on the warrant were to make their reports, and the town was to act upon them.

When that day came it was apparent to all that the end of government by town-meeting in Quincy had come also. The meeting was held as usual at one o'clock, and at that hour the old town hall, though not yet full, showed unmistakable indications that a new power was about to make itself felt in the transaction of the day's business; for a solid phalanx of men — young, energetic and very earnest, but of a different type of face and bearing from the old attendant of the meetings — crowded the benches on the moderator's right; — they were evidently men who worked with their hands, largely Americans of Irish descent, and they took pride in calling themselves Knights of Labor, for so the order to which they belonged was named. They were there with a plan and for a purpose; which, as it subsequently appeared, had been carefully matured in a course of meetings held by their secret order in St. Mary's Hall in West Quincy. These meetings had, indeed, been quietly going on during the regular and open sittings of the committee on the warrant, whose action step by step was thus supervised.

Presently the hall, which would seat only some 700 persons, became so crowded that many had to stand in the aisles, while many more turned away unable to pass the doors; though not one voter out of four on the poll lists was present,

it was obvious the town-house could not contain all who sought to attend. A large portion of those entitled to take part in the transacting of business were in this way debarred from so doing,—practically disfranchised; and, had they been there, they would merely have contributed to make the meeting, when it came to a decision of contested issues, more unmanageable than it already was.

At first things proceeded in the regular way, though all were conscious of a certain unusual atmosphere,—a species of electric tension; but the usual votes were passed providing for the order of business, and the earlier recommendations of the committee on the warrant were adopted. At last an issue was presented, and a trial of strength took place. It came on the recommendation of the committee on the warrant instructing the selectmen to appoint certain police officers to enforce the laws against the sale of intoxicating liquors, and making an appropriation therefor. The committee, in accordance with the precedents established in previous years, further reported a form of vote in which the selectmen were requested to appoint Henry H. Faxon a special officer for the enforcement of the laws referred to.

While the town, at the annual meeting three weeks before, had, as already stated, voted by an overwhelming majority against the licensing of bar-rooms, it had at the same time, acting on party lines, elected a board of selectmen, a majority of the members of which were Democrats, and, as such, known to be against the enforcement of this vote; and it soon became evident that those composing the effective voting force in the adjourned town-meeting were in sympathy with the majority of the board of selectmen rather than with the mass of the voters of the town. An industrial organization—a trades union—was present, whose forces were combined and marshalled as a unit to put certain measures through, regardless of logic, expense or legality, and without listening to reason. So those composing this organization now proceeded to carry out the purpose for which they had come. After a spirited debate, the vote recommended by the committee was defeated by a large majority, and its defeat greeted with noisy applause. The question who dominated over the meeting

was then settled once for all; and, for the remainder of the day, as measure after measure came up, the defeat of the party which, for fifteen years, had conducted the business of the town, became more and more pronounced, until their demoralization and rout were complete, and, indeed, ludicrous. The final test was on the articles of the warrant, which have been recited, relating to the employment of town laborers. The committee had recommended the indefinite postponement of these articles; but all of them were now carried by triumphant majorities, and it was frankly avowed, in the course of debate, that those present and in control of the meeting were not only able to have their own way, but, regardless of law or sense, intended to do so. It was an effective working combination of the Knights of Labor, the payers of a poll-tax and those who had voted against the closing of the bar-rooms. And yet, at this meeting, although not above one out of four of the legal voters of the town were present at it, the largest number voting on any one question upon which the meeting was polled was but 505, while the Knights of Labor and their allies numbered, as nearly as could be computed, but about 250. In other words, under the existing conditions and system of government, two hundred and fifty men, voting in an organized form, were able to place such results as they saw fit on the record book of the town.

It is, of course, needless to say that, so far as the votes in relation to the employment of town laborers went, they were neither more nor less than an open and unblushing robbery of treasury and tax-payer; a robbery in degree only less than if the majority had reversed the figures and decreed nine dollars a day for two hours' work. In the whole hall there was not a single man who in the management of his own affairs would for a moment have thought of doing that which the majority now decreed town officials should do in the management of public affairs; and the reign of common sense would instantly have reasserted itself could the question then have been presented in a reverse form through a kindred proposition to the effect that, in borrowing money for the use of the town, such borrowing should be confined to citizens or in-

habitants of Quincy, and that the lenders should receive therefor not less than eight per cent. interest instead of six per cent., if six per cent. chanced to be the current rate; or, if it had been proposed that all supplies purchased for public use, including tools and articles for the workhouse, should be purchased only of those in Quincy who dealt in such articles, and that the sellers should uniformly receive for them at least twenty per cent. over and above the current market rates. Such propositions, if advanced, would have been received with derision, and incontinently voted down without a voice in their favor. On the other hand, it was even then well known, and afterwards became apparent, that, with the current rate of wages at \$1.50 per day, a town which insisted upon paying its employees \$2.00 would be overrun with applicants. This proved to be the case; and within ten days of the time of the town-meeting the commissioners in charge of the highways had applications from four times the number of men they needed, all of whom were anxious to work ten hours a day for the wages fixed by the town. Under these circumstances, acting with creditable independence, the board declined to recognize the vote of the town-meeting, and for that year laborers were paid \$2.00 a day for ten hours' work. More than they asked was not forced upon them. But at the next annual meeting, the same organization being still in control, this action of the officials was reversed; and not only did the town formally request its officers to squander the public money by paying for a given commodity more than it was worth in the market, — thus itself inciting those in charge of its affairs to jobbery and embezzlement, — but certain of the foreign-born manual laborers of Quincy were also made by vote of town-meeting a favored class. And in this last respect the action taken was not without interest as illustrating the complete way in which the wheel turns under a pure system of popular government. Probably nine out of ten of those thus favored were men born in Ireland, many of whom had not been in America long enough to be naturalized. It was but a few years since the town by overwhelming majorities had voted in favor of greatly restricting the political rights of the foreign-born; and now, by a majority so large

that the vote was not contested, it insisted on paying men of that class larger wages than they demanded for fewer hours of work than they stood ready to give.

Yet, in itself, even for Quincy, the action of the adjourned town-meeting of March 28, 1887, under other circumstances would have meant little. The town had before in its existence repeatedly passed through such episodes. It was merely one of those movements — irregular as well as spasmodic, — necessarily incident to the imperfections of any form of human government. A disturbing element had been introduced; and difficulty followed. That the difficulty was more than temporary there was on the surface no good reason to suppose. Exactly such a difficulty had arisen after the disturbances of the revolutionary period, at the time of Shays' insurrection, when Azariah Faxon's extraordinary manifesto was entered on the town book. Indeed, the attempt of 1887 to affect the working of the great law of supply and demand, through town-meeting action, might well have closed with Faxon's announcement, borrowed from the records of just a century before, that the names of those responsible for such action — at once childish and demagogic — “will shine Brighter in the American annals than if they were to Cary the Terror of their Armes as far as Gibraltar.”¹ But, passing on in the history of the town, another exactly similar disturbance to that of 1888 occurred in 1837, when work on the newly opened quarries brought into the town great numbers of voters, introducing a new element into the management of its affairs, so that, it will be remembered, John Quincy Adams then wrote that the Democrats maintained their ascendancy, “though consisting of transient stone-cutters from New Hampshire;”² just as, fifty-six years before, his father, at the time of Shays' insurrection, had described how the people, in the course of annual elections, had “discarded from their confidence almost all the old, stanch, firm patriots, and had called to the helm pilots much more selfish and much less skilful.”³ And again another similar disturbance occurred in 1854, when the native American or Know-Nothing epidemic raged in the manner which has been described.⁴ In all these

¹ *Supra*, 265.

² *Supra*, 317.

³ *Supra*, 266.

⁴ *Supra*, 320-2.

cases, the town, for the moment, was torn from its moorings; but it merely required some degree of patience and the passage of a moderate amount of time to restore it to order, system and good sense. The difficulty now was that the fundamental conditions had changed. It had become demonstrated that the constituency was not only no longer homogeneous, — that time would cure, — but it had also in size become unmanageable, — and time would in that respect only tend to make matters worse. It was the consciousness of this fact which oppressed J. Q. Adams, as at the close of the meeting he wearily left that moderator's chair which he had occupied by common consent through the sessions of almost a score of years. Meeting at the foot of the platform Mr. Porter, who had acted as chairman of the defeated committee on the warrant, and who a year later became the first Mayor of the city, — meeting Mr. Porter as they together left the hall, Mr. Adams sadly remarked that his work in connection with town affairs was ended. Quincy was merely repeating the experience of Boston seventy years before, — an experience which many other places have gone through since, and which many more are destined to go through hereafter. The old order of things had come to a close. Nevertheless, the immediate process through which it came to its close was not without interest, nor, as a lesson, without its use.

Already, at a public meeting of the citizens of Quincy held as long before as the 14th of December, 1885, the question of a city charter had been discussed, and the ancient traditions seemed again to assert themselves; for the town now moved in the same formal and methodic manner which had more than a century before characterized its action when the constitution of 1780 was before it.¹ Once more it was a question of organic law. A strong party still adhered to the town-meeting form of government; but those so doing were forced to admit that things could no longer go on as at present, and the only alternative to a city government was a division of the town. The committee appointed by the meeting to consider and report on the subject divided on that issue, a minority recommending a division of the town while the ma-

¹ *Supra*, 258-9.

jority reported in favor of a city government. The arguments against the latter were obvious and familiar, — city governments had not worked well in other places, they led to extravagance, municipal rings, heavy taxation, debt, jobbery and corruption; the answer was that a city government, whether open to these objections or not, was a necessity, that the time for a liberal expenditure of money had come, that the town-meeting was disposed to be niggardly and was outgrown, and that a new policy was demanded. The old economical methods and the objection to debt were almost contemptuously dismissed. On the other hand, the argument against a division of the town was not easy to meet; for such a division failed either to meet or to remove the difficulties of the situation. These difficulties arose even more from the increased requirements, than from the mere numerical increase, of the population. Police and water supply and drainage were territorial questions; and they involved also financial methods and a systematic administration of large affairs and complicated details inconsistent with the simplicity of town-meeting government. A division of the town, therefore, would prove a mere temporary alleviation, if, indeed, it would even be that.

After long and earnest debate the recommendation of the majority of the committee was adopted, and a new committee of fifteen appointed to whom was entrusted the difficult task of framing a charter which should meet the objections of those opposed to a city form of government and afford some adequate protection against the acknowledged dangers incident thereto, as seen in the experience of other places; for, throughout the debate, it had been argued that this could be done. The committee of fifteen put the details of the work committed to it in the hands of a sub-committee consisting of Messrs. Josiah Quincy, the sixth of the name, and Sigourney Butler, both young lawyers; and for over a year the matter was under the careful advisement of these two. In January, 1887, two months before the fateful annual meeting of that year took place, another meeting of citizens had been called to which the committee of fifteen presented a report. The form of charter then submitted was subsequently, after

lengthy discussions at various meetings, in the main adopted, and the committee instructed to submit it to the legislature.

At the time, this charter was regarded with no inconsiderable degree of curiosity, and its subsequent working has been watched with interest. As the first mayor elected under its provisions stated in his inaugural address, no New England city then had, nor has any since received, a similar charter. It constituted, in fact, as it was intended it should, an attempt at a new departure in the matter of municipal government. As such the principles upon which it was framed are worthy of consideration.

Following the analogy of the constitution of the State and of the United States, the Massachusetts municipalities have always been organized with executive, legislative and judicial departments; but the fact has more and more been lost sight of that municipal governments are business rather than political organizations. It is no part of the proper function of those handling municipal affairs to consider philosophical principles of state-craft. They are, on the contrary, persons selected by the constituencies to do the work entrusted to them, because the constituent masses have grown so large that they can no longer meet in one body to do that work themselves. The function of the municipal officer is, therefore, to administer the affairs of a local community in an intelligent and business-like way. Nevertheless, in Massachusetts the municipal governments have always been traditionally framed with the cumbrous machinery of the larger political bodies. They have, as matter of course, had their Board of Aldermen, representing the Senate, and their Common Council, representing the more popular branch of the Legislature. Yet in the election of these two bodies, the existence of a divided interest in the community has never been recognized; any more than the fact that the essential feature of a correct municipal administration is the economical expenditure of the money collected from the tax-payers. As no political rights are involved, those being sufficiently provided for in the constitution and laws of the State, one of the two legislative bodies should, on any correct theory, represent property as distinguished from individuals, — tax-payers as

distinguished from the beneficiaries of the money raised by taxation. But this distinction has never been made. Again, the functions of the several departments of the ordinary city government have, in the course of time, become irretrievably confused. Responsibility has ceased to exist; for the legislative has by degrees encroached on the executive until, in the greater number of cities, the mayor is reduced to a mere cipher, while certain irresponsible combinations in the legislative chambers and the city hall, generally known as "rings," really control the administration of affairs. Almost of necessity, the executive functions have more and more fallen into the hands of commissions and boards, as the special requirements for streets, sewers, lighting, police, etc., grow in importance. These boards, if not irresponsible, are certainly as a rule not responsible to the chief executive.

Public attention had for years been forcibly called to these gathering difficulties by the occurrence of scandals of ever increasing notoriety, more and more discussed in the press, which it has already been said those who drew up the Quincy charter bore freshly in mind. Accordingly, this charter was framed in consultation with those both within and without the State who had made a special study of the subject. It was long, consisting, in the form in which it was finally passed, of no less than seven distinct titles, containing fifty-six articles besides subdivisions. The seven titles related to the Constituency, the Legislative Department, the School Committee, the Executive Department, and the Administration offices, or Boards, with a final title in which various general matters were provided for. The fundamental principle of the whole instrument was the distinct line of demarcation preserved in it between legislative and executive functions.

The Quincy city charter was based on correct political theories in so far, at least, as it was not a creation, but an outgrowth. In this respect, the principle at the base of all successful constitutional government was in it carefully regarded, — the fundamental principle that "everything which has power to win the obedience and respect of men must have its roots deep in the past, and that the more slowly every institution has grown, so much the more enduring it is

likely to prove."¹ The system under which the town business had for fifteen years been successfully handled — that of the reference by the town-meeting of the annual warrant as a whole to a general committee appointed by the Moderator — had been productive of good results. It was not this part of the machinery which had failed in its working: the failure had been in the primary body, — that is, in the town-meeting; and the failure had been caused simply by the natural growth of the town. Changing, therefore, the system to which the community had become accustomed in the least possible degree, it was proposed through the charter simply to do away with the town-meeting as a legislative body, leaving the rest of the machinery as unchanged as was possible. The scheme was to substitute a responsible single executive, in the person of the Mayor, for the old board of three Selectmen; and then to make the customary committee on the warrant, under the name of a Council, an elective and permanent body, dispensing with the town-meeting which hitherto had been accustomed to pass, legislatively, upon the committee's action.

Building upon this foundation, it then became necessary merely to distribute the power and functions of the proposed government. This the framers of the charter did by following the maxim, — "Deliberation is the work of many; Execution is the work of one." The absolute power of appointing and removing all executive officers was, under the charter, conferred upon the Mayor, wholly irrespective of the legislative department, except in so far as conferring such full appointing power was, as in the case of schools, etc., in conflict with the general policy of the Commonwealth. But wherever these exceptions occurred, the municipal officers or boards elected under the general law of the State had the same absolute power of appointment and removal of the subordinates in their departments as the Mayor had in his. The Mayor of Quincy was avowedly intended to be clothed with a more arbitrary power within his department than had ever been confided in the United States to the executive head of an organization deemed political. He only was elected by the people; all other administrative officials, except in the one case stated, were appointed by him and responsible to him.

¹ Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, i. 26.

To compensate for the large power thus given to the Executive, equally large responsibilities were imposed upon him. The Mayor might attend, and he and all the administrative officers were, if so called upon, required to be present at every regular meeting of the Council, in order to give such information as might be asked for as to the business of their respective offices. They had no votes; but they were subject to being interrogated, and they had a right to speak upon all matters pertaining to their departments. And this right of executive officers to participate immediately in the deliberations of the legislative department, combined with the obligation to meet inquiry, was looked upon as one of the essential features of the scheme, remedying a serious defect which experience had developed in the practical working of all American constitutions, — a defect to which attention had frequently been called, but for which a remedy was now for the first time, it was believed, sought to be applied. In addition to this privilege of influencing the discussions of the Council, and the liability of being subject to its inquiries on all matters pertaining to their several departments, the administrative officers were required to place upon public record the reasons for every removal from office made by them. The term of office of the Mayor, as well as of all others in the city government not removed by him, was left at one year, the customary term in the cities of the Commonwealth; as those who framed the charter saw no objection to requiring the chief executive, as well as those composing the legislative body, annually to present themselves to the people for approval of their course, to be evinced by a reëlection.

The only members of the city government, beside the Mayor, to be elected by the constituency, were the members of the Council and the members of the School Committee. Instead of dividing the legislative department into two branches, the Council comprised the sole body, for the framers of the charter reasoned that the arguments urged in favor of two legislative branches in the larger and purely political organizations did not seem to be of weight in the case of cities, while that division did tend to confusion and division of responsibility. The Quincy city council was in fact intended

to be more in the nature of the board of directors of a corporation than of a State legislature or the Congress of the United States. Of the Council, five members were elected on one ticket at large, and the remaining eighteen were to be elected three from each of the six districts, or wards, into which the city was to be divided.

Such was the framework of the charter under the provisions of which the old town of Quincy became a city, in January, 1889. It seemed right and appropriate that the instrument under which the change took place should have been drawn by one who, bearing the same name as the town, was descended from its first land-owner, and even then was living upon the soil which had been granted to his ancestor when, in 1634, Boston received enlargement at the Mount. Prepared in full sympathy with the current political theories of the day, it still remains to be seen whether the Quincy charter will, or will not, constitute a new and successful departure in municipal government. The period during which it has been in operation has not as yet been sufficiently long to afford a basis upon which to pass judgment on this point: but whether, as a new departure, it proves in the result a success or a failure, it was undeniably an honest, an intelligent and a well-considered attempt at the solution of a problem which, now that slavery is disposed of, is at once the most important and the most perplexing before the American people. The tendency of population to concentrate itself at given points is no less unmistakable than its increase; and hitherto the failure of the democratic system in cities has been quite as marked as its success in towns.¹ Of late the attempt has been, through an ingenious and carefully studied readjustment of the parts of government and their relations to each other, to devise a machine, — a species of patent back-action, self-regulating constitution, — which, once set in motion, will work of itself, warranted infallibly to produce all, and even more, of those results which under the old system were the fruits of public spirit and of the active and interested coöperation of all. There is certainly as yet no reason to suppose that a well administered condition of municipal affairs can be brought about

¹ Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, i. 593-619.

in this mechanical, though ingenious, way; and, if subjected to that test, the Quincy charter, it is needless to say, is doomed to failure. Nevertheless, in devising it the town once more rose to the occasion, and grappled in a fearless and individual way with the question which to-day chiefly occupies practical publicists. Once more, and for the last time, the complicated movement of the great whole was reflected on the mirror of the unit; and could, perhaps, there be most advantageously studied.

But recurring to the course of events in Quincy, the action of the annual town-meeting held in March, 1888, emphasized in the minds of all the conclusions reached at the close of the annual meeting of the year previous; for the industrial organizations now again asserted their power, and showed themselves for the time being in complete control. With a view to removing the complaint that many citizens who desired could not obtain admission, the meeting was held, not in the old Town Hall, but in a large wooden barrack, called the Coliseum, built not far from it some time before for purposes of public entertainment. It was vast in space, a room in which it was not easy to make one's self heard, and the number of persons who, either from interest or curiosity, appeared there, was such that the management of the business of the meeting was difficult; and yet, even at this meeting, the most fully attended the town had ever known, the largest number of votes recorded upon any division was less than 650, or not one quarter part of those whose names were recorded upon the voting lists.

The annual election, of which the meeting was an adjournment, had resulted in what is politically known as "a clean sweep." The sweep had included not only political officials, but even the members of such boards as the Trustees of the Public Library, the Adams Academy, the Park Commission and the Managers of the Cemetery. It was, in fact, just such a political upturning as had occurred nearly forty years before in the Native American or Know-Nothing days; the only difference being that it was now in the interest of what was known as labor, instead of as then in hostility to foreigners.

Throughout, the meeting was marked by the same peculi-

arities, both as respects those who composed it and its modes of action, as the meeting of the year previous. Measures were again passed regardless of their cost or their legality, and those who passed them defiantly refused to listen to reason. Especially was this the case with the articles relating to employment of labor. Under the operation of a rude previous question, now for the first time imposed in a Quincy town-meeting, these articles were forced to an early vote and passed by large majorities. The various boards by whom all town laborers were employed were instructed, under the form of a request, not to employ any person as a laborer in their respective departments unless he had been a resident of the town for at least one year previous to such an appointment. Then followed another vote that the town desired to pay "not less than \$2.00 per day to its employees during the ensuing year;" and opposition to this vote, on the ground of its manifest illegality, was summarily met by the reply that the majority preferred the town should become insolvent rather than not have it pay the sum named. To pay it was a principle; and Quincy ought to go on record in favor of it. The vote was then passed; followed quickly by another instructing the various town boards, again under the form of a request, to consider that "nine hours shall constitute a day's work for laborers employed in their respective departments during the ensuing year." Having then, in the course of one session, covering nine and one half hours, passed all the appropriations included in a warrant of seventy-three articles, amounting in the aggregate to \$177,000, the meeting adjourned; the last annual town-meeting ever held in Quincy.

Early in the following May, the proposed city charter, as it came from the hands of the committee, was passed by the Legislature without debate, and immediately signed by the Governor. Becoming a law upon the 17th of May, it was, if adopted by the town, to take effect on the first Tuesday of the ensuing December; and the Selectmen, in response to a petition to that effect, promptly called a special town-meeting to take action upon it on the 11th of June. At this meeting the new form of government was adopted by a vote of 812 in favor to 454 against,—a majority of 358 in a total vote of

1,266. In the town there were over 2,400 legal voters: and it thus appeared that but one half of those entitled to express an opinion on a question not lacking in importance, took the trouble so to do; but by many of those who failed to record their votes, whether for or against, the result was looked upon not only as a foregone conclusion, but as a necessity, as unavoidable as it was to be regretted. It was useless to vote against it; they would not vote for it. When the result was declared from the platform of the Town Hall, the announcement was received with every manifestation of delight, and soon the bells rang loudly out, amid the sound of horns and guns and the explosion of fireworks. The tower of the old stone church opposite sent forth a peal as if some great victory had been achieved. "The King is dead! Long live the King!" And yet there were those, nor were they few in number, upon whose ears the clang of the bells and the shouts of rejoicing grated harshly. An old political system, indisputably great, was gone, — a system which, the admiration of philosophers, had carried the people in safety through periods of great trial, and brought them up into what they had become. More than once it had been the ark of New England's salvation. In the case of Quincy, the change might be necessary, — probably it was necessary, — but was it to be rejoiced at? — The past was secure; — would the future prove an improvement upon it? — In any event, those who thought in this way would have preferred to see the ancient system — so endeared to them by custom and time — laid away as a parent that was gone, — silently, tenderly, reverently.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE.

IN June, 1888, when the city charter was adopted, Quincy had been an independent town for a little over ninety-six years. During those years its population had risen from 1,081 to the neighborhood of 15,000. The course of its growth and development, it has been the object of the present narrative to describe.

If a system of government is to be judged by its fruits, and there is no other practical test which can be applied, the Massachusetts town government as exemplified in the case of old Braintree and Quincy would have no cause to fear a critical examination of its long record. Between the 26th of September, 1639, when the first form of local government was organized at Mount Wollaston, and the 7th of January, 1889, when the new city government of Quincy was inaugurated, a period of time lacking less than nine months of two hundred and fifty years was included, — greatly more than half since the discovery of America by Columbus. Upon the last of the two dates just named, the ancient town form of government — a government directly by the people — transferred the affairs of the municipality to the new city organization; and those affairs were then in such shape as spoke for itself. The municipality was absolutely free from debt; for in its treasury were assets which had been steadily accumulated to meet the few outstanding notes not yet due, and the assets in value exceeded those notes by a liberal sum. The new city was adequately supplied with school-houses and public buildings sufficiently commodious for its wants; although the needs of the old town in this respect had been rapidly increasing with an increasing population. The roads would have sufficed for any reasonable traffic, although they suffered somewhat under the burdens to which they were subjected by a use

peculiarly severe. For years the public bar-room had been closed, and the reform which John Adams earnestly labored and looked for nearly a century and a half previous had at last been brought about; the police and criminal records of the town showed clearly with what results. These things had resulted from sustained, consistent public action; but at the same time private munificence had not been wanting. The new city entered into life not ill endowed.

Foremost among the monuments of individual liberality were the lands, known as "The Schoole Lands," referred to on the opening page of the earliest volume of the Braintree records. These lands, remaining in the hands of the town through the entire two hundred and fifty years, had in 1855 been largely set aside for use as a cemetery. As such they remain a permanent memorial of William Coddington.¹

¹ It has always been assumed that the so-called "Schoole Lands" referred to on the first page of the Braintree records were a free gift, as implied in the text, from William Coddington to the town of Braintree. Accordingly Hancock, in his centennial sermons (p. 22, n.), refers to Coddington as "the munificent donor" of those lands; while Dr. Lunt devotes considerable space to him as "one who deserves to be remembered by the inhabitants of this place." (*Two Discourses*, 1840, Appendix F, p. 73.) Pattee, speaking even more positively, says that "Mr. Coddington, soon after he removed to Rhode Island, through his agent, Mr. Richard Wright, gave his large landed estate . . . to the town of Braintree, for the purpose of establishing and supporting the public schools, in order that future generations might reap the benefit of a liberal education, and thus see the folly of excommunicating from society individuals for their honest religious opinions." (*Old Braintree and Quincy*, 316-7.) Where a tradition of no great moment, in regard to an occurrence two centuries and a half old, is handed down through one hundred and fifty years, it should not be lightly dismissed, and accordingly it is accepted in this case; but nevertheless, as appears from a communication on this subject printed in the *Quincy Patriot* of September 19, 1891, any evidence in support of the tradition of a free gift on the part of Coddington has been sought for in vain. After Coddington went to Rhode Island, there was unquestionably a litigation over his grant, and consequent hard feeling on his part. (*IV. Mass. Hist. Coll.* vi. 317.) On the first page of the Braintree Town Records the land in question is referred to not as given by Mr. Coddington, but as "recovered" of him. The natural inference is that these lands, through some proceeding of which no record remains, were secured by the town as a result of Mr. Coddington's exile, and on payment of what was deemed at the time a fair equivalent; and, so far from his being a "muni-

Next came the bequest of John Adams, in 1822, whose library, given to the town at his death, found in 1882, as already stated, a permanent resting-place upon the shelves of the Crane Memorial Hall; while the academy building, for which he had provided, was in 1871 erected, in accordance with his injunction, on the site upon which stood the house in which John Hancock was born. There, at the time of the city organization, it had been quietly doing through sixteen years the work which the founder contemplated, — giving to the youth of his native town that higher education which he had been compelled to find for himself.

More than forty years later, in 1869, came the fund bequeathed by Ebenezer Woodward, together with more of the ancient Coddington grant, upon a portion of which it was provided that an additional academy, for the education of girls only, was to be built. When the assets of the town of Quincy were transferred to the city which succeeded it, this fund amounted to \$223,000.

The Crane Memorial Hall has already been sufficiently referred to. In it was housed a library of some 12,000 volumes, gradually accumulated from many sources through a period of nearly twenty years, affording to all inhabitants of Quincy access to what for every practical purpose is a people's university.

Finally, in 1885, two tracts of land, the gift of individual citizens, had been conveyed to the town of Quincy, to be kept forever, as pleasure grounds; one at the north, covering another portion of the tract originally granted, in 1634, to Edmund Quincy; while the other, at the south, had, prior to his death, been given to the town. Dr. Pattee, in his statement, "The Faintest of the Faintest Donor," he regarded himself as one despoiled of his rightful possessions. Dr. Pattee's other statements in this connection are pure surmises wholly unsustained by evidence.

There was also another seventeenth-century town benefactor, — in all probability the first. This was Samuel Veasey, a mariner, who, dying at sea, in 1695, bequeathed by will "the sum of twenty pounds money, for and towards the maintenance and use of the schools of Braintree." (Pattee, 324.) The bequest seems never to have been paid over to the town (*Records*, 83, 90-1), but the name of "Samuel Veasey, mariner," should be entered next to the head, if not actually at the head, of the honorable list of those who have given to Braintree and Quincy in aid of public education.

1762, been a portion of the South Commons: the two covered together more than one hundred and ten acres. These reservations secured to the future city, in the course of its growth, ample space for public gardens and for popular recreation.

The new Quincy, therefore, entered upon its career under different auspices from the original town, either Braintree or Quincy, — not inadequately supplied with the requirements of modern civic life. With it all things were not to be either obtained or created.

In the *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* there is a striking passage wherein he records his boding thoughts as he wandered about his native town one autumn day in 1844. He was then an old man, for it was hard upon seventy years since he had, as a boy, served in revolutionary times as post-rider between Braintree and Boston. Anxious, despondent, aged and overworked, he at this time had just received tidings which clearly pointed to the choice of Polk as President, foreshadowing the annexation of Texas to the Union and the consequent spread of the area of slavery. He looked upon his own reëlection to Congress then nearly impending as improbable. Engaged in bitter political controversy, nearing his own end, he foresaw more clearly than others the terrible trials which did indeed then remotely impend over the country. It was the month of October, and the time and the solitude quickened his feelings. He thus described them: —

“I took a walk round the garden, nursery and orchard. The desolation of the season cast a gloom on my spirits. The fruit has been gathered from all the trees. The ground is strewn with sere red and yellow leaves; it is wet and gathered in clods. Most of the large trees are mere stems, stripped of all their leaves. I hastened in from this prospect. Again, as the sun went down, I walked up the hill to Charles’s house,¹ to see the sunset. But, although it was not quite five o’clock, the sun was already behind Mount Ararat. I went further over the hill, and surveyed the village, the surrounding country, the harbor and bay of Boston, the State-

¹ This was the house, still standing, on President’s Hill, built in 1838 by Charles Francis Adams, and in which he lived as a summer residence until 1850. It was the custom of President J. Q. Adams when at Quincy to watch the sun rise and set from the piazza of this house every fine day; but, when he wrote, it was vacant, his son having moved to Boston.

House of Boston itself, and the shaft of Bunker Hill Monument; and memory returned to the fact that this day eighty years ago¹ my father and mother were united in marriage. What an *ordo sæculorum* commenced for me from that day! What was then the condition of the people who constituted the town of Braintree? What is the condition of the three towns of Quincy, Braintree and Randolph now? And what will be the condition of the occupiers of the soil of these three towns in eighty years from this day? The recollection of the past is pleasing and melancholy; the prospect of the future — oh, how gloomy it is! Not a soul now lives who was then in the bloom of life. Not a soul now living will be here in 1924. My own term — how soon it will close!

More than half of the allotted period thus sadly forecast is already gone. Nor was it without reason, in the autumn of 1844, that to the trained eye of the old statesman the future seemed gloomy, for over it clouds both thick and black were then already gathering. His were no idle forebodings; for, better than whom else, he realized what those clouds portended. What he feared came about. At last that slavery question, on which his whole mind was intent, ripened into war, — a civil war which involved his native place and his family, even as it and he had been involved in his own early youth. But all in good time each new danger was met and overcome by those who succeeded him, just as he and his had met and overcome their dangers in the past. And now that nearly fifty years have elapsed, it may fairly and truthfully be said that his native town has not before met better days. It was hardly to be expected that the old simple village system, even in its most developed shape, should there outlast two centuries and a half. But none the less, whatever the future may have in store, it may safely be said that when the ancient town on the 6th of January, 1889, ceased to exist, at no time before had it contained within its limits so many prosperous, well-to-do, contented, self-governed and well-governed human beings as those limits contained that day. Never was the standard of virtue, temperance, education and public spirit so high. Never did Quincy face the coming years with such confidence in its own ability to master each new difficulty as it should arise. As in 1844, “the recollection of the past (was) pleasing;” but in 1889 “the prospect of the future” could not be said to be “gloomy.”

¹ October 25, 1764.

